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An Image of Shakespeare





# An Image of Shakespeare

*by* Frank Mathew



Jonathan Cape

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## P R E F A C E

Ψυχῆς εἰμὶ Πλάτωνος ἀποπταμένης ἐς "Ολυμπόν  
Εἰκόν, σῶμα δὲ γῇ γηγενές 'Ατθίς ἔχει.

WE shall never understand Shakespeare unless we can learn the history of his Poems and Plays. Lisideius in Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* says that "he conceived a Play ought to be a just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind." This was Hamlet's view when he said that the purpose of Playing was "to hold, as it were, the Mirror up to Nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image." We must see the mirror correctly if we want to discern a just and lively image of Shakespeare.

We have been misled by our deference to the opinion of foreigners. The German students, for instance, who have tried to explain him to his countrymen were forced to rely on such hints as could be found by research, because they knew little of the nature of Englishmen. Without under-rating the debt we owe to the industry of some of the German students, such as Gervinus, we should remember that no rational Englishman would try to interpret Molière to the French. If our notion of Shakespeare is foreign it is sure to be wrong.

The fact that a Play was printed or mentioned or performed on the Stage in a particular year cannot prove that it had not been written before, and the metrical tests may be only signs of revision. The only important clue is the fact that there is a difference between juvenile and elderly work. If we knew nothing about Giovanni Boccaccio we could be sure that he wrote his *Fiammetta* before most of his *Rime*, and his *Questione d'Amore* before his *Decameron*. Three of Shakespeare's Narrative Poems and some of his Plays survive as he wrote them when he was young, and we

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can be sure that his other juvenile work resembled them in manner and mood. We ought to be able to recognize the change in his manner better than students reading Plays in a language which is foreign to them, and we ought to see the change in his mood better than any foreigner can.

Our acquaintance with his private affairs is dangerous unless it is coupled with an intimate knowledge of his different times, and this is also required because he mirrored the days in which he was living. Mr. Bradley, for instance, writes in his *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*: "When we study the history of the times in which the Elizabethan dramas were composed, when we examine the portraits of famous men, or read such a book as the *Autobiography of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, we realize that the violent actions and passions which the dramatist depicted were like the things he saw." This intimate knowledge is out of the reach of the most industrious foreigner—even Gervinus, though he wrote "So wie die Zeit, so war der Dichter selbst," exhibited a natural ignorance. No rational Englishman would try to explain Luther's times to the Germans.

While the history of the Plays is confused Shakespeare's image in them must be distorted, and if we have a wrong notion of him they also would be misunderstood. It ought to be possible to discover the right Order of his Poems and Plays. The Order commonly accepted to-day, with some variations, is founded on chance hints and metrical tests, and many students have recognized that it cannot be right. Mr. Saintsbury, for instance, writes in his *History of English Prosody*: "I ought to say, that it seems to me pretty certain that some (and perhaps many) of the Plays represent very different stages and were, in all probability, begun, suspended and finished with more or less rewriting, sometimes at long intervals." And he writes in the *Cambridge History of Literature* about *The Merchant of Venice*: "To the present writer it has been for many years a moral certainty that these different parts are of different dates, and that a similar difference prevails much more largely in Shakespeare's work than is commonly thought"; and about *Measure for Measure*, "it was certainly, or almost certainly, performed in 1604, and it has been customary to accept that year as the approxi-



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mate date of its composition. To the present writer this appears very improbable, and he would select *Measure for Measure* as the strongest instance of the suggested earliness, in a more or less complete form, of many more Plays than are contained in Meres' list." All modern students have recognized that several Plays, for instance *Romeo and Juliet* and *Troilus and Cressida*, show signs of revision. And Sir Walter Raleigh writes in his *Shakespeare*: "There is good reason to think that many of his Comedies are recasts of his own earlier versions now lost to us. . . . When the Theatre came to its maturity, complete five-act Plays, with two plots and everything handsome about them, were required to fill the afternoon. The earlier and slighter Plays and Interludes were then enlarged and adapted to the new demands."

The right Order should show when Plays were first written and when they were revised. This method would solve many problems about the dates of the Plays: for instance, *Cymbeline* might be ranked with the earliest, as Coleridge suggested in his *Classification Attempted* of 1819, and also with the last in accordance with the metrical tests and Simon Forman's mention of it and the place given to it by Heminge and Condell in the Folio of 1623.

It may be that the First Folio Order would help us to discover the right one. Even Mr. Saintsbury writes of "the notoriously haphazard Order," and even Sir Walter Raleigh writes: "In the Folio Shakespeare's work is divided into three kinds—Comedy, History and Tragedy. The Classification of the Plays under these headings is artificial and misleading. *Cymbeline* appears among the Tragedies; while *Measure for Measure*, a play much more tragic in temper, is numbered with the Comedies. *Richard the Second* is a History: *Julius Cæsar* is a Tragedy." But these instances were chosen unluckily, for *Cymbeline* was planned as a Tragedy (as is shown by its title, the *Tragedy of Cymbeline*), and it is not a Comedy now but a Tragi-comedy ending in impossible happiness, and *Measure for Measure* was a Comedy first, though it became Tragi-comical when its meaning was darkened in an older revision, and *Richard the Second* is ranked with the Histories because, like all the other Plays in that class,

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it is an English Chronicle History or a Scene in the Pageant of the Annals of England.

If Heminge and Condell had printed a fourth class, Tragi-comedies, it could have included *Cymbeline* and *Measure for Measure* and many other Plays. They may have remembered how Philip Sidney condemned "the mongrel Tragi-comedy" in his *Apology for Poesy*, or they may have perceived how difficult it would be to discriminate, since many Comedies became Tragi-comical when they were revised and some of the Tragedies, *Hamlet* and *King Lear* and *Othello*, for instance, had a Comical vein. And they may have disliked the recent Italianate Tragi-comical fashion. Their three classes echoed the Licence granted to them in 1603 "freely to use and exercise the art and faculty of playing Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Interludes, Morals, Pastorals, Stage-Plays, and such other like as they have already studied," and these were the three classes named first by Polonius when he spoke of "the best actors in the World, either for Tragedy, Comedy, History." Since they did not use the fourth class their division was a natural one. They must have known all the facts and they may have preferred to set the Plays rightly when there was nothing to be gained by inventing an irrational Order.

Heminge and Condell printed the Comedies thus—*The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Next they printed the English Chronicle Histories according to the dates of the Reigns. Last they printed the Tragedies, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Coriolanus*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Timon of Athens*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Cymbeline*.

Francis Meres wrote in *Palladis Tamia*, printed in 1598: "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the Stage, for Comedy witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his



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*Love's Labour's Lost*, his *Love's Labour's Won*, his *Midsummer Night's Dream* and his *Merchant of Venice*: for Tragedy his *Richard the Second*, *Richard the Third*, *Henry the Fourth*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo and Juliet*." Meres only professed to cite some Plays as examples, and he set them all in the First Folio Order except *Love's Labour's Won*, which may have been the first form of *All's Well that Ends Well*, and *King John*, which may have been the last of the four Histories selected by him and classed with the two Tragedies *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*. This would be a curious coincidence if the Folio Order was a haphazard one. In that case it would also be a curious coincidence that Heminge and Condell printed the Tragedies, except the two first and *Timon of Athens*, in an Order close to the one commonly accepted to-day. Since *Troilus and Cressida* appears to be founded on two juvenile Plays and *Timon of Athens* is an unfinished revision of an earlier one, the main ground for rejecting this part of their Order is the fact that *Coriolanus* is printed early in it, and this would be explained if they knew that Shakespeare had written a form of *Coriolanus* when he was young. Since they printed the Chronicle Histories in the historical order (which was the natural thing to do because they were Scenes in an Historical Pageant), the modern Order mainly differs from theirs about the dates of the Comedies. And Coleridge came near the Folio Order when after putting *Love's Labour's Lost* in the earliest epoch in his *Classification Attempted* of 1819, he said: "In this same epoch I should place the *Comedy of Errors*. . . . I add *All's Well that Ends Well*, originally intended as the counterpart of *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*."

It may be that Heminge and Condell had a definite rule. Perhaps when they thought that a Play had been little changed in revision except in its manner, which may have seemed of small importance to them because they were Players and concerned with the story, they put it according to its original date and when one had been altered in its structure they ranked it according to the date of the change. For instance, they may have printed *The Tempest* first because it was founded on a juvenile Comedy and appeared the same Play to

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them (since the story survived in spite of an elderly revision which changed it to a wise Tragi-comedy), while they printed *The Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline* later because the young stories had been altered in them.

Of course, the right Order ought to differ from theirs in combining the three divisions which were intended to put Plays of the same nature together; but perhaps it ought to recognize theirs as a proof that some form of each Play was written first or revised at the time denoted by it and ought to reconcile theirs and Meres' corroboration of it with the Order suggested by the stray hints and by the metrical tests.

The right Order of Shakespeare's Poems and Plays would show us an image of him as he was altered by a natural growth and it would help us to value the stories about his private affairs, if they interest us at all, for if we listen to gossip about some one we know, we test it according to our knowledge of him.

This Order may yet be ascertained by some English or American student. And this is the right time for that task. Though more details may be found, the long labours of Mr. Halliwell-Phillips and of Sir Sidney Lee, for instance, have gathered many things which were hidden from Gervinus and Coleridge, and the England which Shakespeare knew is passing away. Those of us who are elderly can remember a time when there were many remote villages where people were living in a wholesome placidity, only concerned with their immediate affairs, reading little or nothing or unable to read, spending every night of their lives in the same little houses centuries old, never desiring to go anywhere else, ripening like their apples and falling when their time was complete. In that ancient tranquillity we were able to find Chaucer's England or Shakespeare's; but our children will look for those quiet places in vain. And many other things which survive from England's old days are vanishing with the calm of those villages. I propose to begin this task by making suggestions which students more learned may correct or reject.

(1915-1920.)

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## THE PLAYS OF YOUTH

### I

SHAKESPEARE wrote the buoyant Prose of his time with a rhythm of his own easily recognized in such sentences as "the tears live in an onion that should water this sorrow," or "I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Aragon comes this night to Messina," or "Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies." His Prose was gay when he was young and stately when he began to be old. We can discern from it not only the order of his Writings, but also blunders still popular in all the Editions as, for instance, when we read in *Twelfth Night* that Sir Tobysqueaked out his catches "without any mitigation or remorse of voice," the rhythm proves that Shakespeare wrote "without any remorse or mitigation of voice."

A great deal of the Prose of his time was controlled by the fashion which is commonly called Euphuism though it was admired at the Court before Lyly wrote *Euphues*. Queen Elizabeth was always an Euphuist. When she was eleven she wrote in Italian to Katharine Parr a letter beginning "Inimical Fortune, envious of all good, and ever-revolving human affairs have deprived me for a whole year of your illustrious presence." This was a Spanish fashion set at Queen Katharine of Aragon's Court and after her time when, for instance, the second Lord Berners translated Antonio de Guevara's *Dial of Princes* (*Reloj de Principes*) in 1534 as the *Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius*.

John Lyly wrote *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, "hatched in the hard winter in 1578," when he was aged about twenty-five. He seems to have meant it to be a picture of some one, perhaps Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, to whom he dedicated *Euphues and His England* in 1580. Lord Oxford, who was then about twenty-eight and had returned from his travels in Italy in 1576, was a poet and a patron of writers. *Euphues* meant well-formed and hence well-intentioned and eloquent and witty,

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and the *Anatomy of Wit* began thus, "There dwelt in Athens a young gentleman of great patrimony, and of so comely a personage, that it was doubted whether he were more bound to Nature for the lineaments of his person, or to Fortune for the increase of his possessions. . . . This young Gallant of more wit than wealth, and yet of more wealth than wisdom, seeing himself inferior to none in pleasant conceits, though himself superior to all his honest conditions, insomuch that he thought himself so apt to all things that he gave himself almost to nothing but practising of those things which are incident to these sharp wits, fine phrases, smooth quips, merry taunts, jesting without mean and abusing mirth without measure." This young Gallant's letters are in the mode of the day, as can be seen, for instance, if we compare them with the correspondence between Edmund Spenser and his "singular friend," Gabriel Harvey, who wrote, "Young Euphues but hatched the eggs that his elder friends laid."

Lyly imitated Guevara, particularly in the chapter called *Euphues and Atheos*; but he echoed the Court fashion in these two little books instead of inventing it. Hazlitt wrote of him in his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, "It is singular that the style of this author, which is extremely sweet and flowing, should have been the butt of ridicule to his contemporaries, particularly Drayton." The vices and virtues of Euphuism are much more distinct in Sidney's *Arcadia*, which was finished in 1581, and since Drayton, for instance, admired Sidney's style we can guess that Lyly's was ridiculed by personal enemies.

This fashion of beautiful speech was based on the theory that words should be used harmoniously in Prose as in Verse and set out of their natural order if the melody of a sentence required it. The national English Prose is sane and straightforward, neither spangled with adjectives nor twisted to fascinate. But this temperate Prose only became national when the English were sobered. There was a young mood in Queen Elizabeth's time, and this foreign fashion suited the fantastic and buoyant life of those days. The men who followed it could have cited King Duarte of Portugal's rules in *O Leal Conselheiro*, "que se screvam cousas de boa sustancia, claramente pera se bem poder entender, e fremoso, o mais



## BLANK VERSE

que elle poder, e curtamente quanto for necessario." Though some of them overlooked his advice that Prose should be clear and brief as well as charming, this fashion enriched our language with many beautiful pages which will be studied if anyone should seek to revive the lost art of musical English. And though Shakespeare lived to renounce his early extravagance he was always an Euphuist.

Shakespeare followed another fashion in writing Plays in Blank Verse. Rhyme had been employed for the Stage because it had assisted the Players to remember the words and because the Drama had sprung from the old chants or recitations of Minstrels. Blank Verse was adopted instead and, like the old rhymes, it was mainly employed as Metrical Prose. Shakespeare did not imagine that when Holinshed's words, "after the death of Pharamond," were changed into—

### After defunction of King Pharamond

this alteration had turned Prose into Poetry, but he saw that the use of this metre allowed him to write Poetry without the jar caused by an alteration of form. Besides, Blank Verse added dignity to the long recitations which were retained from the Traditional Stage. This dignity led to the use of ordinary Prose in some Plays which were not meant to be dignified: Gascoigne, for instance, wrote a Tragedy in Verse and a Comedy in usual Prose. And Shakespeare often kept this distinction, writing recitations or dignified passages in Blank Verse and turning to the usual Prose to mark a change in his tone.

It has been stated that Henry Howard, who was called Earl of Surrey by courtesy, was the first to write English Blank Verse; but this is improbable. The first Italian Carnival Comedies seem to have been written in Prose; but about 1519 Ariosto invented or used his Verso Sdrucchiolo as a compromise between Prose and Verse, probably based on the Latin trimeter iambic, and the later Italian Comedies were either in Prose or in Versi Sciolti, Blank Verse. It may be that Blank Verse was employed by the Traditional Stage of England soon after it was the fashion in Italy or earlier, for it was merely Chaucer's favourite metre delivered from the shackles of rhyme.

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Shakespeare seems to have learnt the first music of his verses from Chaucer, though he imitated Spenser and Marlowe and others besides when he was beginning to write. His first two Narrative Poems are imitations of Chaucer, as well as of Ovid, and his third, *A Lover's Complaint*, resembles, for instance, Chaucer's *Complaint of the Black Knight*, but this may have been due to an imitation of Spenser's *Ruins of Time*. A day came when he could surpass all his masters, except Christopher Marlowe, writing his Blank Verse with a music which was his individual voice. But that day was slow in coming. The difference between his mature and immature Verse and between his mature and immature Prose is patent to any reader who happens to have an ear for such things. This difference (which is not a mere matter of metrical tests, such as whether he used a redundant syllable as Ariosto had done in his Verso Sdrucchiolo, but a radical alteration) remains the best clue to the order in which he wrote parts of most of his Plays.

If he had not rewritten his Plays even a foreigner could hardly help seeing that many of them had been written in Youth; but he rewrote or retouched nearly all of them, turning to some of them again and again, and the result is that in many of them his immature work remains blended with the work of maturity.

Some students have argued that when immature work is visible in one of the Plays, as, for instance, in *Macbeth* or in *Timon of Athens*, we should ascribe it all to somebody else. Even Mr. Masfield has written of *Timon of Athens* in his *William Shakespeare*: "*Timon of Athens* is a Play of mixed authorship. Shakespeare's share in it is large and unmistakable; but much of it was written by an unknown Poet of whom we can decipher this, that he was a man of genius, a skilled writer for the Stage, and of a marked personality. It cannot now be known how the collaboration was arranged. Either the unknown collaborated with Shakespeare, or the unknown wrote the Play and Shakespeare revised it." It does not seem probable that Shakespeare would have stooped to collaborate with anyone else in the days when he wrote the masterly part of *Timon of Athens*. We have either to think that he collaborated with somebody else in a great

## A GROAT'S WORTH OF WIT

many Plays, or that he wrote the immature work when he was young.

It seems to me that one man wrote the immature work in all Shakespeare's Comedies, except *The Taming of the Shrew* and perhaps *Pericles*, and in all his Tragedies. The Plays in the English Chronicle Pageant printed as Histories by Heminge and Condell are apart from the rest, and there are many voices in them. He used stories and Plays written by others when he was writing his Comedies and Tragedies also, but he did this in a different way, transmuting them and making them his.

We know that *Venus and Adonis* was printed in 1593 and the *Ravishment* or *Rape of Lucrece* and *Titus Andronicus* in the following year. It is probable that the two Narrative Poems and the Melodramatic one had all been revised before they were printed, and we do not know when they were first written. In the year before *Venus and Adonis* was printed Robert Greene wrote in *A Groat'sworth of Wit*: "There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tiger's heart wrapt in a Player's hide* supposes he is as well able to bombast out a Blank Verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country." This seems to prove that Shakespeare had begun as a Player and that when he was aged about twenty-six he had earned success and dislike by writing Plays of different kinds.

Sir Sidney Lee writes in his *Life of William Shakespeare*: "There is no external evidence to prove that any piece in which Shakespeare had a hand was produced before 1592. . . . But his first essays have been, with confidence, allotted to 1591." Instead of supposing that *A Groat'sworth of Wit* complained of such a recent beginning, I take it to be evidence that Shakespeare had written Plays for several years, for it would have been extraordinary if he had earned such success in one year while he also worked as a Player. Besides, the few Plays which Sir Sidney Lee doubtfully assigns to the year 1591 could not have made anyone claim to be the only Shake-scene in England. And, instead of concluding that Shakespeare during most of his life recurred to the work of some unknown and immature Dramatist, I suggest that he



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used or rewrote many of his own early Plays or Interludes written before 1592.

In those times the Players were still ranked with the Jugglers. For instance, Sir Walter Cope wrote to Lord Cranborne in January, 1604-1605, "Sir, I have sent and been all this morning hunting for Players, Jugglers and such kind creatures, but find them hard to find ; wherefore leaving notes for them to seek me, Burbage is come." The Jugglers seem to have been Mountebanks and Reciters and Singers like the Spanish Juglares whose name may have come from Jocolator, perhaps through the French versions Jogleor and Jongleur. They seem to have been masters of some tricks of illusion in Chaucer's time, for he wrote in *The Squire's Tale*,

It is rather like  
An apparence made by some Magic,  
As jugglours playen at the festes great ;  
and in *The Franklin's Tale*,

For I am sure that there be Sciences,  
By which men make diverse apparences,  
Like to the subtile Juggelours when they play,  
For oft at Festes have I heard it say  
That juggelours within an halle large,  
Have made incomen water and a barge  
And in the halle rowen up and down :  
Sometime hath seemed come a grim leoun,  
Sometime a castle all of lime and stone,  
And when they would it vanished anon :  
Thus seemed it to every man's sight.

Chaucer's account would be sufficient to prove that there was an old Stage-craft apart from the Church Pageants and Miracle and Morality Plays if there was any reason to doubt that the Common Players provided an immemorial amusement. The Strolling Players, who went from house to house to perform at revels and banquets, would not have been welcomed if all their Plays had been pious. King Richard the Second and King Edward the Second, who both employed Players, would not have been pleased if all the Plays had been

## ORIGIN OF THE SECULAR DRAMA

sermons. The Religious Drama of England must have been separate from the Secular one which was only meant to amuse.

The Secular Drama of England sprang from the songs and recitations of Minstrels who were succeeded by Strolling Players performing short Chronicle Plays which led to the longer Chronicle Histories. Mr. Tucker Brooke says in his *Tudor Drama*: "Coeval with the beginnings and earliest development of the regular Stage under Religious auspices, there had existed an entirely popular species of quasi-dramatic entertainment, much less definite in form and less rich in evolutionary possibilities, but even more firmly ingrained in the life of the Nation and deep-rooted in hoariest antiquity. . . . Most commonly it dealt with the celebration of heroic qualities and lauded individual prowess." These Heroic Plays seem to have been the chief stock-in-trade of the Players. For instance, Thomas Nashe wrote of the Plays in *Pierce Penniless*, printed in 1592, "First, for the subject of them for the most part it is borrowed out of our English Chronicles." These Plays were England's national Chronicles, preserving the memory of former events, not as they were recorded in the seclusion of Cloisters but as they had been understood by the men who bore the brunt of the fighting. In them, as the Prince said in *King Richard the Third*, the History of England survived as it was—

reported  
Successively from Age to Age.

And in them such mythical Heroes as Sir Bevis of Hampton or Guy of Warwick were shown with the legendary pictures of Kings. These Chronicle Histories dealt with current affairs as well as with the deeds of the Past; for instance, it is recorded that King Henry the Eighth, disguised as a gentleman, watched some Common Players acting a Comedy in which he was shown killing the Monks, and also that after his death and before he was buried a Play depicting the Comical Tragedy of his Reign was performed by Lord Oxford's Players at Southwark.

The Religious Drama of England sprang from the Ritual of the Catholic Church. The Church Pageants and Miracles

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

were Catholic sermons, and because they were Catholic they were abolished in the Protestant days. (I use the terms Catholic and Protestant here and elsewhere in the sense in which they were commonly understood in those times.) For instance, the York Cycle was forbidden to show the Coronation of the Virgin in 1548, and was changed further in 1568 and 1572 and suppressed with the Coventry Cycle in 1580, though twenty years later there was a last attempt to revive the Chester Plays—which had been called the Popish Plays of Chester in 1575. The Catholic Church was hostile to the Secular Drama, as it is still, for no Priest is allowed to see a Play in a Theatre. Cardinal Manning, for instance, while condemning the Stage, wrote: “The mind of the Church is sufficiently shown in the fact that *histriones* were held to be *in statu reprobatorum* and deprived of Christian burial.” And though some of the Strolling Players performed humorous Morals as Interludes because they were popular, they repaid that hostility, particularly in King Henry the Eighth’s time and Queen Mary’s. The Secular Stage rose into favour when the Religious Stage was suppressed.

This separation set the English Drama apart from the Drama of Spain which sprang from the Spanish Mystery Plays, such as *El Misterio de los Reyes Majos*, and resembled them at first in its Autos. And its national growth sundered it from the Drama of Italy which began when Ariosto revived the old Roman Comedies in the mood of the Carnival. It might have resembled the Drama of France if this had sprung from the Pièces Farcies acted by Les Clercs de la Basoche or Les Enfants sans Souci in rivalry with the Miracle Plays shown, for instance, by Les Confrères de la Passion; but the French dramatists copied Italian and Spanish and Portuguese and Classical models instead of retaining the character of their Secular Stage.

In Queen Elizabeth’s time the Players were still ranked with the Minstrels, and even their longer Plays were still linked with music and dancing. Her Statutes of 1571 and 1596 required all Fencers, Bear-Wardens, Common Players of Interludes and Minstrels wandering abroad to procure patrons if they wished to avoid being prosecuted as Vagabonds. Paul Hentzner, or Hentznerius, wrote in his *Travels in England*,



## THE FIRST ENGLISH THEATRES

written in German in 1598, "Without the city are some theatres where English Actors represent almost every day Comedies and Tragedies to very numerous audiences. These are concluded with music and a variety of dances." And even in 1632 Donald Lupton wrote in *London and the Country Carbonadoed*, "Most commonly when the Play is done, you shall have a jig or dance of all treads ; they mean to put their legs to it as well as their tongues."

We do not know when the Players built their first theatres. In 1578 Thomas White, preaching at Paul's Cross, said : " Look but upon the common Plays in London and see the multitude that flocketh to them and followeth them. Behold the sumptuous theatre-houses, a continual monument of London's prodigality and folly." In the same year John Stockwood said at Paul's Cross : " If you resort to the Theatre, the Curtain and other places of Plays in the City, you shall see the Lord's Day have those places, with many others that I cannot reckon, so full as possible as they can throng," and he spoke of " eight ordinary places " in the City of London. These eight ordinary places may have been the courtyards of Inns or they may have been booths. The sumptuous theatre-houses denounced by White may have been the Theatre and Curtain, the wooden booths built at Shoreditch outside the Walls of London in 1576 ; but these two sermons prove that the Players had many other resorts.

London was then a huddled old town, defended still by its ancient Walls except on the river-side. About a hundred and fifty thousand people lived there, and the length of the original Walls was little more than two miles ; the narrow streets were so packed that few rode in them and nobody drove, and the Thames was still the highway of traffic. This gave the Players a reason for building booths in the fields when they became popular enough to attract the citizens there. Besides, they wished to avoid the Corporation's hostility, which was explained, for instance, in 1597 when the Lord Mayor and the Aldermen of London demanded the final suppression of Stage-Plays, " as well at the Theatre, Curtain and Bankside as in other places about the City," because " they corrupted the young by their exhibition of vices and lascivious devices," and because they were frequented

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

by "the base or refuse sort of people, or such young gentlemen as have small regard of credit or of conscience," and were "the ordinary places for vagrant persons, masterless men, thieves, contrivers of Treason and other idle and dangerous persons to meet together."

The Suburbs outside the Walls or across the River were then known as the haunts of cut-throats and thieves, as they were when Ben Jonson in *Poetaster* (which was first acted in 1601) made Historicus say, "All the sinners in the Suburbs come to applaud our actions daily," and the Players had resorted to them long before this. For instance, we know that Lord Oxford's Company was acting in Southwark in 1547. The lawless Suburbs were congenial to them because they were "vagrant persons," and only exempted from the Laws against Rogues and Vagabonds when they were controlled by a responsible patron. Robert Willis wrote in *Mount Tabor*, printed in 1639: "In the City of Gloucester the manner is (as I think it is in other like Corporations) that when Players of Interludes come to the town they first attend the Mayor to inform him what nobleman's servants they are, and so to get licence for their public playing." In Shakespeare's time they were still Strolling Players during part of the year, going from house to house or town to town in the country, and even when they were acting in their booths in the Suburbs they still kept the old customs of the open-air Stage.

Even the Globe, which was built on the Bankside at Southwark in the fields near the Bear Garden in 1599, was roofless though the back of the stage was protected by a pent-house of thatch. The stage there was a wide platform jutting into the Pit in front of a house or shed with a balcony. The Plays there began at three o'clock, and though some students have thought that a curtain was used to darken the theatre when darkness was needed, we have no record of this. Since the spectators could understand that a scene had been changed from a seashore to a forest or city they could not have needed darkness when they witnessed events which were supposed to happen at night. We have no record that there was any attempt to copy old or foreign costumes. Thomas Platter of Basle, whose narrative of his visit to London in 1599 was printed in 1899, wrote in German: "The Players wear the

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most costly and beautiful dresses, for it is the custom in England that when noblemen or knights die, they leave their finest clothes to their servants, who, since it would not be fitting for them to wear such splendid garments, sell them soon afterwards to the Players for a small sum."

Paul Hentzner wrote in his *Travels in England*: "At these spectacles and everywhere else the English are constantly smoking the Nicotian weed which in America is called tobacco. . . . At their theatres, fruits, such as apples, pears and nuts, according to the season, are carried out to be sold as well as ale and wine." The men and boys in the Pit were apt to be turbulent, as is recorded in *Julius Cæsar*, "If the tag-rag people did not clap him and hiss him, according as he pleased and displeased them, as they use to do the Players in the theatres, I am no true man"; and in *King Henry the Eighth*, "These are the youths that thunder at the Play-house and fight for bitten apples."

We have no reason to think that the Common Players altered the nature of their old entertainment when they built their new booths in 1576. The Classical or Italianate Plays, written, for instance, by Gascoigne or by Lyly, were not intended for them but were acted by students or the boys of the Choirs, such as the Children of Paul's, for courtiers or others who had some education. These Plays were literary and meant to be printed, but most of those acted at Shoreditch or Southwark provided amusement for people who were mainly illiterate, and few of them were intended to be studied in books. Even in 1604 John Marston complained in the Preface to *Malcontent* that "Scenes invented merely to be spoken should be enforcibly published to be read."

Most of the Players came from the lowest ranks. Even James Burbage, who built the Theatre and was the chief of Leicester's Players, began life as a carpenter, and Lord Strange's Company was formed first in 1589 from men who had served him as tumblers or acrobats when they were boys. When Shakespeare was young no woman was allowed to adopt the disreputable life of the Stage. Thomas Coryat in his *Crudities*, printed in 1611, wrote that in Venice he saw women act, "a thing that I never saw before, though I have heard that it hath sometimes been used in London"; but it



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may be that all Shakespeare's feminine Characters were entrusted to men or boys in his time. And if we can trust the Corporation of London no respectable women went to the theatres.

Though between 1580 and 1590 dramatists of some education, such as George Peele, Robert Greene, Thomas Kyd, Anthony Munday and Christopher Marlowe, began to write for the Players, some of them imitating foreign examples or the Plays written for the courtiers and students, the Theatre and Curtain exhibited fencing and wrestling and dancing combined with Interludes still. William Lambarde wrote in his *Perambulation of Kent*, printed in 1576 and 1596, of men who went "to Paris Garden, the Bell-Savage or Theatre to behold Bear-baiting, Enterludes or Fence-play." Interludes seem to have been Plays written to be acted between other entertainments or after a feast or during a revel. Short Plays were required for all such occasions as when Theseus said in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,

Say, what abridgment have you for the evening?  
What Masque? what Music? How shall we beguile  
The lazy time if not with some delight?

For instance, it is recorded that Henry Medwall's lost Interlude, *The Finding of Truth*, which was acted before King Henry the Eighth at Richmond in 1514, was condemned for its length, "it was so long it was not liked: The Fool's part was the best, but the King departed before the end to his chamber." Abridgments seem to have been Plays which were shortened to be acted as Interludes.

The Players were often described as Players of Interludes, as for instance, in Queen Elizabeth's two Licensing Statutes, and they acted them still after her time, as was shown when King James granted his Licence to Shakespeare's associates in 1603. Ben Jonson wrote when he dedicated *Volpone* to the two Universities (perhaps about 1616, though that Play was first acted in 1605), "the increase of which lust in liberty, together with the present trade of the Stage, in all their misc'line Enterludes, what learned or liberal soul doth not already abhor? . . . But my special aim being to put a

## INTERLUDES

snaffle in their mouths that cry out, 'We never punish Vice in our Enterludes.'"

The Licence of 1603 shows that the Interludes were distinguished from Morals and Stage-Plays. Mr. Pollard in his *Fifteenth-Century Prose and Verse* cites a lawsuit which in 1530 showed that the Interludes were acted in Winter and the Stage-Plays in Summer. This may mean that the Stage-Plays were longer and acted out of doors on a stage while the Interludes were acted without one indoors in any town-hall or room. We know that some of the later Morals and Morality Plays were acted as Interludes and were called by that name. But, as Mr. Tucker Brooke says in his *Tudor Drama*, the term Interlude came more and more to be employed in the Tudor period "as the gradual disappearance of the Religious element rendered the expression 'Moral Play' increasingly a misnomer." They seem to have been of similar length but distinguished by the fact that the Morals were intended to edify. The Players of Interludes mentioned in the Licensing Statutes with Bear-Wardens and other Vagabonds could not have restricted themselves to edifying performances, and we can infer that the men described by Sir Robert Dudley, afterwards Earl of Leicester, as "his servants, Players of Interludes," in 1559, did not attempt to entertain him with piety.

In Queen Elizabeth's time the Interludes may have been mainly Comedies, as would have been natural when they were associated with revels. For instance, the Treasurer's Accounts show that Shakespeare and Burbage and Kemp were paid for "two several Interludes or Comedies" acted at Greenwich Palace in 1594. But we have no reason to think that the Strolling Players of Interludes only performed Comical Plays, for many Heroic Plays and Chronicle Histories must have been Tragical. And we know that "an Interlude concerning King John" was acted for Cranmer in 1538.

The Secular Drama seems to have grown from songs or chants, recitations, dialogues, short Plays of the nature of Interludes, and Chronicle Pageants or Histories. And the Religious Drama seems to have grown under the influence of the dramatic Ritual of the Catholic Church from sermons, dialogues, Miracle or Morality Plays to its last form the Pageants or Cycles shown first by the Church and later by

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Guilds which were Religious in origin and mainly concerned, like the Guild of the Holy Cross at Stratford-on-Avon, with good works, including the provision of Masses for the living and dead. The Morality Plays seem to have been the Interludes of the Catholic Church.

The Mummers' Plays were Interludes founded on the Religious and the Secular ones and distinguished from these because they travestied them and were performed by the Rustics in their holiday sports. The Masques were the Mummers' Plays of the Court. For instance, Edward Hall in his *Chronicle* wrote of one acted in 1509, "the torchbearers were apparelled in Crymosin Satin and green like Morescoes, their faces black, and the King brought in a Mummary," and George Cavendish wrote in his *Life of Cardinal Wolsey*, "The banquets were set forth with Masques and Mummeries, in so gorgeous a sort and costly a manner that it was a heaven to behold."

When the change called the Reformation delivered the Secular Drama from its rival and enemy the Drama of Sermons, Plays of all kinds were added to the Chronicle Histories. The Players of Interludes must have employed some foreign stories before (such as, perhaps, the story of Pericles), in the same way as the French Players founded their *Robin et Marion* on the English Robin Hood Plays, and they probably used some familiar Classical themes, such as Cæsar's Fall, and repeated some of the private murders of the day in their Chronicles.

There may have been from the first some remembrance of the Drama of Rome in the Secular Drama as there was in the Morality Plays written by men who knew Latin, the language of the International Church. Four hundred years of Roman civilization in England during which Plays were performed publicly must have left echoes in the minds of the English. Besides, Terence had been greatly admired through all the Middle Ages and Plautus had rivalled him since 1427 and their Plays were still seen as when, according to Holinshed, "there was a goodly Comedy of Plautus played before the King and Queen and the hostages" at Greenwich Palace in 1520. This may help to account for the resemblance between the English and the Roman buffoonery. Still, the influence



## FOREIGN INFLUENCE

of the Drama of Rome, if indeed it survived, must have been very much weaker than it was when the Plays were written by men who were acquainted with Latin.

Most of the new dramatists who began to write for the Common Players about 1580 could read Latin and Italian and Spanish, and these often turned to foreign books for their plots because there were so few English stories in print. These foreign books put them in touch with the World's common stock of stories. Mr. Edward Hutton says in his *Giovanni Boccaccio*, "Certainly to the Contes and Fabliaux of Northern France a third part of the *Decameron* can be traced, much too to Indian and Persian sources and a little to the *Gesta Romanorum*." *El Conde Lucanor*, written by Don Juan Manuel and printed at Seville in 1575, was founded on stories brought to Spain by the Moors and as old as the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, which were traced by Masondi in his *Golden Meadow* (Nouradj-al-Zehel), written in 944, to Persian and Greek and Indian tales gathered by Caliph Mansour who began his reign about thirty years before Caliph Haroun Al-Raschid. And other Writers, such as Giraldi Cinthio, borrowed tales from *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*. Some of Boccaccio's stories could be read then in English, for sixteen of those in the *Decameron* were translated in William Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, printed in 1566 and 1567, and two others in the *Forest of Fancy*, printed in 1579, and there were many other foreign ones in the *Hundred Merry Tales* which were printed in 1565 and 1588. But most of the stories in the *Decameron* and in *El Conde Lucanor* and Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*, licensed in 1565 and printed in the following year, had not been translated, and this gave them the charm of novelty when they were seen on the Stage.

The Plays founded on such stories as these were only foreign in setting and could have been made English by altering the names and the scenes in the same way as Ben Jonson changed the second edition of *Every Man In His Humour*. Indeed, it would have been hard to make a play foreign when there was no scenery except a thatched shed, and when sign-posts were used instead of programmes to show that the platform should be taken to be a Forest near Rome or the imaginary Coast of Bohemia, and the Players wore

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second-hand finery in the fashions of England. So the English Drama remained essentially English in spite of the fact that some foreign plots were added to the old stock-in-trade of the Traditional Stage.

Mr. Moulton says in his *Ancient Classical Drama*: "The English reader will bring his mind into the right focus for appreciating Old Attic Comedy if he imagines a modern Pantomime into which is infused a strong element of the highest literary power." This might be said too of England's national Drama: it resembled the Pantomimes imported to Rome about 21 B.C. by Pylades and Bathyllus or the *fabulæ togatæ*, of which the younger Seneca wrote in his Eighth Epistle, "*Habent enim hæ quoque aliquid severitatis et sunt inter comœdias et tragœdias mediæ.*" Most of its Tragedies remained Pantomimic or Tragi-comical because they were blended with inappropriate Clownage, as even *Tamburlaine* was when it was first shown on the Stage and as even the Church Pageants (for instance, the Wakefield or Towneley Cycles) had been. And the English Stage remained Pantomimic till it ceased to be national when Ben Jonson and his followers killed its natural growth.

Shakespeare wrote the Plays of his time as well as its Prose and Verse when he began. Mr. George Baker writes in *Representative English Comedies*: "By 1590 the boisterous Romantic Drama, the often inchoate Chronicle History, both frequently accompanied by scenes of would-be comic horseplay, engrossed public attention. The great period of experimentation with both old and crude forms was beginning." I think that Shakespeare began to write for the Stage while he was still a Player on it, some years before 1590 when Interludes were still in demand. And I think that he began with short Plays of the nature or length of Interludes. I infer this from the fact that the separate parts visible in most of his Plays seem to have been of an appropriate length. Besides, it would have been a natural thing for a beginner to do and particularly for one whose chief work was still the trade of a Player. He may have begun with Tragical efforts, as so many other writers have done, in the same way as many actors begin with visions of succeeding as Hamlet though they

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

may be destined to be known as buffoons. If he began by copying Kyd and then turned to imitate Lyly this would help to explain why only one of his Tragedies survives as he wrote it in his ignorant days, though some of his first Comedies were left little changed.

This Tragedy, *Titus Andronicus*, was printed in 1594 and may have been revised in the manner of his Narrative Poems. It may have been first written in Quatrains like Robert Wilmot's *Tancred and Gesimund*, which was written in Quatrains about 1568 and was published in Blank Verse containing some Quatrains in 1591. This is suggested, for instance, when Andronicus says in the second Scene of the second Act,

The hunt is up, the morn is bright and grey,  
The fields are fragrant, and the woods are green :  
Uncouple here, and let us make a bay,  
And wake the Emperor and his lovely bride,

for the last line may have ended with Queen and this may have been changed because Shakespeare remembered that the Emperor's wife should be an Empress. Elsewhere in this Play Tamora is often called Empress, but sometimes Queen, as when Andronicus says in the fifth Act—

In the Emperor's Court  
There is a Queen attended by a Moor.

In any case the manner and mood of the present form seem to show that it was written before the final revision of *Venus and Adonis*.

This charming Play remains lyrical, a Melodramatic Poem. We are reminded that its terrible doings are as innocent as the shadows that chequer the bright Forest of Arden when Tamora says,

The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,  
And make a chequered shadow on the ground,  
Under their sweet shade, Aaron, let us sit.

The wicked Moor, Aaron, whose love-making and cruelty may have suggested Othello's, is as pleasantly false as Andronicus



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who raves like King Lear and pretends to be more mad than he is, like Hamlet.

Some of the horrors are openly imitated from Ovid's. When Andronicus asks,

Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so ?  
the boy answers,

Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's Metamorphoses.

Like Ovid's they are meant to afford the pleasure sought by Andronicus when he turned from his afflictions to read—

Sad stories chanced in the times of old  
as by King Richard the Second when he said,

Come, let us sit upon the ground,  
And tell sad stories of the deaths of Kings.

In this young story of impossible crimes Shakespeare supped full of horrors, as a schoolboy might do, and if anyone condemns him for this there is the answer—

Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's Metamorphoses.

He pointed to one source of his horrors when he made Andronicus say,

This is the tragic tale of Philomel,  
And treats of Tereus' treason and his rape,  
And rape, I fear, was root of thine annoy.

This links it with *The Rape of Lucrece* and both are connected with *Cymbeline* when Iachimo says in the second Scene of the second Act of that Play,

Our Tarquin thus  
Did softly press the rushes ere he wakened  
The chastity he wounded. . . .

She hath been reading late  
The Tale of Tereus, here the leaf's turned down  
Where Philomel gave up.

Shakespeare could have said of this Play as Horatio did in *Hamlet*,

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

So shall you hear  
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts,  
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,

or with Othello,

On horror's head horrors accumulate.

He tried to increase Ovid's horrors, as when he made Demetrius and Chiron cut off Lavinia's hands and made Andronicus say to them,

For worse than Philomel you used my daughter,  
And worse than Progne I will be revenged,

and prepare their heads for Tamora's meal (instead of using a child's flesh as was done in Ovid's version and Gower's in the Fifth Book of *Confessio Amantis*), so that he was able to say when they were sought,

Why, there they are both baked in that pie,  
Whereof their mother daintily hath fed.

This last change made his version ridiculous : since the pie could not have been vast enough to hold two men he made Tamora eat two heads without detecting her fare.

It may be that he combined his version of Philomela's calamity and Procne's revenge, using Gower's names for the story, with a plot suggested to him by a similar play, *Lust's Dominion or The Lascivious Queen*. Though *Titus Andronicus* is meant to be Roman and its scenes are in Rome or in a neighbouring forest, the story seems Spanish and may have been based on some old Spanish legend of the days of the Visigoths. It may be that he could have said, as in *Lust's Dominion*,

Now Tragedy, thou minion of the night,  
Rhamnusia's pewfellow, to thee I sing.  
Upon an harp made of dead Spanish bones.

This may have referred to the fact that the Revenge Tragedies were supposed to be modelled on those ascribed to Lucius Annæus Seneca, who was a native of Cordova. Ben Jonson, for instance, called Seneca "him of Cordova dead"

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in the Verses prefixed to the Folio of 1623, and Guilpin wrote in *Skialetheia*, printed in 1598,

Or if my dispose  
Persuade me to a Play, I'll to the Rose  
Or Curtain, one of Plautus' Comedies  
Or the pathetic Spaniard's Tragedies.

The most prominent Writer of these Plays, Thomas Kyd, may have been one of the shifting companions who, according to Thomas Nashe's Preface to Greene's *Menaphon*, printed in 1589, borrowed from Seneca read by candlelight (that is, with the help of translations). But Kyd owed more to Spain than to Rome. Spain was the Country of Romance in his eyes, as he showed when he used the Danish story of Hamlet in *The Spanish Tragedy*, and his Plays have the Spanish cruelty which seems to have come from the heartless tales of the Moors. When Shakespeare revelled in horrors in *Titus Andronicus*, and perhaps in the first versions of most of his Tragedies, his mind had the young cruelty shown in the immemorial tales of the East and in the Mythology which Ovid preserved.

Heminge and Condell printed two Plays, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Coriolanus*, as Tragedies before *Titus Andronicus*; but both of these seem to have been rewritten by Shakespeare towards the end of his life. They began to print *Troilus and Cressida* between *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Cæsar* and then gave that place to *Timon of Athens*. They did not name it in the Table of Contents. If, after they began printing it, they came to believe that it should have been put with the Comedies they saw this too late, for they had printed the Comedies and Histories first. They could not have meant it to be ranked with the Histories since these are all Scenes from the Pageant of the Annals of England. It may be that they decided to put it according to the date of the first form of one of its parts, the finished Story of Hector.

Mr. Saintsbury writes in his *History of English Prosody*: "It is impossible that *Troilus and Cressida*, in part at least, should not be early, and it must be remembered that the fact of Meres not mentioning a play is not final." Sir Sidney Lee



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writes : " In matter and manner *Troilus and Cressida* combines characteristic features of its author's early and late performances. His imagery is sometimes as fantastic as in *Romeo and Juliet*, elsewhere his intuition is as penetrating as in *King Lear*. The problem resembles that which is presented by *All's Well that Ends Well* and may be solved by the assumption that the Play was begun by Shakespeare in his early days and was completed in the season of maturity." And many students have recognized three parts in this Play, the stories of Troilus and Hector and Ajax. It may be that Shakespeare wrote one of these parts when he was beginning to write and another, the Story of Troilus, about the time when he wrote *Love's Labour's Lost* and combined these and added the Episode of Thersites and Ajax about 1601 during the War of the Poets (which would explain why Heminge and Condell began printing this Play before *Julius Cæsar*) and revised them about 1609.

*Coriolanus* is a man's work and echoes the gravity and hardness of Rome. We would be tempted to say that the mind in it is not Shakespeare's, though the manner is his, if we did not find the same mood in *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens*. It may be that all these were first written when he was young and revised darkly near the end of his days. This would help to explain the contrast between *Coriolanus* and his other mature tragedies except *Julius Cæsar*. They are aching with sympathy, but this is external and rhetorical work. This Play, like *King Richard the Third* and *Timon of Athens*, is planned in Marlowe's proud way : there is a dominating figure in it and the rest of the Characters have little importance. It may be that instead of reverting to imitate Marlowe after he had surpassed him he copied him here with a beginner's humility.

*Coriolanus* imitates North's version of Plutarch : it is a close dramatic copy repeating or expanding the speeches. Such a method would have been natural when he was beginning, and if he had written a first form in this manner Heminge and Condell might have thought that this Play should be ranked as an early one. If he had written it first when he was mature, he would have transfigured North's version as he did when he wrote *Antony and Cleopatra*.

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*Coriolanus* is closely linked with *Timon of Athens*. Both are tales of Ingratitude, and *Timon of Athens* was another *Coriolanus* who raged in solitude and befriended his country's enemies instead of commanding them. *Timon of Athens* is obviously based on a Play written in Youth, and if he took the story from North's version of Plutarch, which was first printed in 1579, he may also have founded a first form of *Coriolanus* on Plutarch when he was beginning to write. But the structure of *Coriolanus* suggests that he did not write it when he was young enough to write the crude form of *Timon of Athens*, and the place given to it by Heminge and Condell may only mean that he wrote a version of it before he revised *Titus Andronicus*. It may be that he revised *Timon of Athens* about 1600 (when the second Earl of Essex was seen in *Timon's* place) and began to rewrite it afterwards as the last of his Tragedies. Dryden thought it the last and Mr. Dowden has said that it was their climax. If so, this would explain why Heminge and Condell printed it before *Julius Cæsar*, since the last form of it was only begun.

*Julius Cæsar* seems composed of two parts, a Play of Ingratitude dealing with Cæsar's fall and a Senecan one showing the revenge of his ghost. It may be that the first of these was first written in a Classical group with the Story of Hector and *Timon of Athens*, and the other among the Plays of Revenge, and these groups may have been linked by *Titus Andronicus*.

We cannot be certain that Shakespeare was the poet described in Kemp's *Nine Days' Wonder*, printed in 1600, "whose first making was the miserable stolen story of Macdoel or Macdobeth or Mac-somewhat." Still, *Macbeth*, as we have it, seems a noble revision of a juvenile Tragedy. It may be that its first form belonged to a group which included the first forms of *Othello*, *King Lear*, *King Richard the Third*, *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Four of these Plays, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *King Richard the Third* and the story of Brutus in *Julius Cæsar* exhibit Senecan ghosts seeking revenge. Even if this was an imitation of Seneca instead of Kyd it was Spanish, and all these first forms may have shared the Spanish mood of *Titus Andronicus*.

Shakespeare founded *Macbeth* on Raphael Holinshed's

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Chronicles of England and Scotland, printed in 1578 and reprinted with John Hooker's additions in 1586, and he may have used an obsolete Play if it was "a miserable stolen story." The first form may have suggested a similar Play dealing with King Richard the Third which was borrowed from the Traditional Stage. The wicked Moor, Aaron, with the Jewish name, may have suggested the Moor of Venice, who may in his turn have suggested the Jew of Venice, and Andronicus may have suggested King Lear's frenzy and Hamlet's simulation of madness.

All this group of first forms may have resembled *Titus Andronicus* in imitating Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, which may have been written about 1586 and was printed in 1594 like *Titus Andronicus*. Sir Israel Gollancz writes, "*Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy* may well be described as twin dramas," and he adds, "To this same class of drama belongs *Titus Andronicus*, and it is interesting to note that early in his career Shakespeare put his hand to an Hamletian Tragedy." It may be that Shakespeare put his hand to his first version of *Hamlet* when he was young, and this may have been one of the Plays in Nashe's mind when he wrote in his Preface to Greene's *Menaphon*: "Yet English Seneca, read by candlelight, yields many good sentences as 'Blood is a beggar' and so forth, and if you entreat him fair in a frosty morning, he will afford you whole *Hamlets*, I should say Handfuls of Tragical speeches." But this may only refer to the fact that Kyd had used the story of Hamlet which he may have found in the *Historia Danica* by Saxo Grammaticus, printed in 1514, or in Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*, printed in 1570. His story differed from the story of Hamlet in making a father revenge a murdered son. Shakespeare may have copied from it the ghost demanding revenge and the use of a Play set in a Tragedy. Sir Sidney Lee writes of *Hamlet*: "Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* anticipates with some skill the leading motive and an important part of the machinery of Shakespeare's Play." It does not seem probable that Kyd would have copied his own *Spanish Tragedy* by writing a Danish one; but anyone setting out to imitate him might have done this. Neither does it seem probable that Shakespeare would have written a twin drama to Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*



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in 1601 or later when he had outgrown his young mood and the Spanish fashion was dead.

Mr. Tucker Brooke writes in his *Tudor Drama*: "*The Spanish Tragedy* virtually created a great deal of Elizabethan stage business." The long success of this Play (which was afterwards called *The Second Part of Jeronimo*) proves that madness or distraction of mind was recognized as a Tragical theme or a Tragi-comical one. Hieronimo's distraction of mind seems a source of all Shakespeare's pictures of men crazed or distraught and tottering on the brink of Insanity. Pedro says of Hieronimo,

O Jaques, know thou that our master's mind  
Is much distract since his Horatio died :  
And now his aged years should sleep in rest,  
His heart in quiet, like a desperate man,  
Grows lunatic and childish for his son :  
Sometimes, as he doth at his table sit,  
He speaks as if Horatio stood by him,

and Hieronimo says to the Painter,

Art thou not sometime mad ?

Is there no tricks that come before thine eyes ?

"Well, sir, then bring me forth, bring me through alley and alley, still with a distracted countenance going along, and let my hair heave up my nightcap. Let the clouds scowl, make the moon dark, the stars extinct, the wind blowing, the bells tolling, the owls shrieking. . . . There you may show a passion. Draw me like old Priam of Troy, crying 'the house is afire, the house is afire' and the torch over my head ; make me curse, make me rave, make me cry, make me mad, make me well again, make me curse Hell, invoke, and in the end leave me in a trance and so forth." It seems plain that if Kyd wrote these passages Shakespeare echoed him in *Titus Andronicus* and in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* and *King Lear*. And it may be that the echoes were much more distinct in the first forms of these Plays. *King Lear*, even as we have it, seems based on *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*.

*King Lear* combined separate stories, as is shown by the

## POSSIBLE JUVENILE TRAGEDIES

title page of the Quarto of 1608, "Mr. William Shakespeare, his true Chronicle History of the Life and Death of King Lear and his three daughters. With the unfortunate life of Edgar, son and heir to the Earl of Gloucester." The first may have been founded on Holinshed's Chronicles and the second derived from Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, which may have been current in manuscript before it was printed. Both were tales of Ingratitude; but the horrors in them give them a place in the group linked with *Titus Andronicus*.

Coleridge rejected *Titus Andronicus* because he disliked it, in the same way as he called *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* a sketch in his *Classification* of 1802 and omitted it in his *Classifications* of 1810 and 1819. He said in his *Notes on some other Plays*: "To the objection that Shakespeare wounds the moral sense by the unsubdued, undisguised description of the most hateful atrocity . . . I, omitting *Titus Andronicus* as not genuine, and excepting the scene of Gloster's blinding in *Lear*, answer boldly in the name of Shakespeare, not guilty." But the scene of the blinding proves that Shakespeare could have written the horrors of *Titus Andronicus*. And its survival in *King Lear* seems a sign that this Tragedy is based on two others which were written in Youth.

*The Merchant of Venice* is another Play which seems linked with *Titus Andronicus*. It seems compounded from two different Plays, a Tragical one of Shylock's Revenge and an Italianate Comedy, *The Choice of the Caskets*. It may be that in the first of these Shylock was taken from the Traditional Stage to rival the Moor of Venice and was as horrible as Aaron the Moor and resembled Barabas as he was drawn in the Jew of Malta in the immature Scenes which were added to Marlowe's noble beginning.

It may be that after writing these first Tragical Plays Shakespeare turned to two longer Tragedies or fantastic Romances, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*. *Cymbeline* and *King Lear* are connected by a part of their themes, the tragedy of a father's injustice, and by their place in pre-historical England and their tangled construction. And *Cymbeline* is linked with *Othello* by its tale of a loving husband's deception and jealousy and with *Titus Andronicus*

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of the wickedness of a Queen and her son and the atmosphere by a boyish romance. *The Winter's Tale* is connected with *Cymbeline* and *Othello* by a story of jealousy and by the calamities of an innocent lady which also unite it with *King Lear* and with *Titus Andronicus*.

There are three parts in *Cymbeline*, as we have it, Holinshed's tale of Cymbeline and his sons, and the Wager-story told by Boccaccio, and Imogen's fantastic adventure in the Mountains of Wales. The third part may have been added after he had combined the two others in a Romance which had a Tragical ending as its title *The Tragedy of Cymbeline* shows. In this version, I think, Imogen died when Posthumus struck her down at the end; but in the Play, as we have it, she is restored from the grave as Thaisa, Æmilia and Hermione were. These long-suffering ladies all belonged to the type which Chaucer admired when he drew Constance "full of benignity" in *The Man of Law's Tale* and wrote,

The tale of Melibee  
And of Prudence and her benignity

and drew the patient Griselda in *The Clerk's Tale*. The fierce women like Tamora and the Queen in this Play were also in Chaucer's Tales as when he wrote in *The Man of Law's Tale*,

Oh Sultanness, root of iniquity,  
Virago thou!

and of Donegild "the King's mother, full of tyranny."

The restoration from the tomb makes this Play Tragical as *King Lear* would have been if Cordelia and the King had survived. If it was a change made by Shakespeare at the end of his work this would explain why Heminge and Condell put *Cymbeline* as the last of the Tragedies. They may have classed it as a Tragedy still because he had not altered the name and because there is no Comedy in it—the drift of the Play remains Tragical and the end is untrue because there has been no preparation for it.

Samuel Johnson wrote in his *General Observations*: "This Play has many just sentiments, some natural dialogues and some pleasing Scenes, but they are obtained at the expense



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of much incongruity. To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the manners and names of different times and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection and too gross for aggravation." Johnson had no eyes for the Poetry and glamour of *Cymbeline*, and he did not perceive, as Coleridge did, that these faults are signs of juvenile work. The merits too are equally young, and the Play is planned with a boy's lavishness and random invention.

When Coleridge in his *Classification* of 1819 put *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* with the earliest Plays he added: "The example of *Titus Andronicus* which as well as *Jeronimo* was most popular in Shakespeare's first Epoch, had led the young dramatist to the lawless mixture of dates and manners." And the fact that *Cymbeline* and *King Lear* are the two Plays which are most akin to *Titus Andronicus* seems a proof that they were first written in Youth.

*Cymbeline* has the mood of the Mediæval Romances, and this was why Imogen's adventure in Wales, the scene of many of them, resembles a Fairy-tale, as Sir Israel Gollancz has observed when he compared it with the Fairy-tale of Little Snow-White. It is probable that most of the Fairy-tales were early Romances which had dwindled for the amusement of children in the same way as the primitive gods dwindled to Fairies. This Fairy-tale dominates the rest of the Play: if it was omitted *Cymbeline* would closely resemble *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece*.

The Wager-story was told by Boccaccio with indifferent gaiety. His story "Bernabo da Genova da Ambruogiolo ingannato perde il suo" begins gaily. Three rich Italian merchants have been feasting in Paris, "avendo una sera fra laltre tutti lietamente cenato, cominciarono di diverse cose ad ragionare"; they talk of their wives and Bernabo praises his and Ambruogiolo "comincio ad fare le maggior riso del mondo." The same laughter rings in the Italian Novelle which imitated Boccaccio's and in the Queen of Navarre's *Contes et Nouvelles*. Shakespeare remembered it when he was writing his Argument to *The Rape of Lucrece*: "During which siege the principal men of the Army meeting

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one evening at the tent of Sextus Tarquinius, the King's son, in their discourses after supper every one commended the virtues of his own wife ; among whom Collatinus extolled the incomparable chastity of his wife Lucretia. In that pleasant humour they all posted to Rome, and intending, by their secret and sudden arrival, to make trial of that which every one before had avouched." Still, this pleasant humour has no part in that Poem or in this Play : he had not come to the mood of his Italianate Comedies and the wager which would have been light-hearted in them, and therefore left credible, is unnatural here because it is made by Posthumus as Iachimo says,

Sitting sadly,  
Hearing us praise our loves of Italy.

This fault would have left this Play as crudely impossible as *Titus Andronicus* if it had not been redeemed by the glamour of the adventure in Wales. Cloten in this Play might have sinned in *Titus Andronicus* and so might Iachimo, another Iago, but their wickedness is unreal and harmless because the soft light of the Fairy-tale subdues their atrocity. I think that this Fairy-tale was added when Shakespeare borrowed a lighter method from *Pericles*.

There are two Plays in *The Winter's Tale* as we have it. One is a version of the Tragical part of *Cymbeline* with Hermione in Imogen's place and Leontes outdoing Posthumus, and the other, the fourth Act, is a separate Comedy.

The first part is based on Greene's story, *Pandosto* or *The Triumph of Time*, which was printed in 1588 and afterwards called *Dorastus and Faunia*. Greene may have shaped a Play from his story, for his slack mind and wandering manner seem visible in the build of this part. This would help to account for his assertion that Shake-scene was arrayed in his plumes.

As this part was first written Leontes was a caricature of jealousy. When it was revised he remained a boy's picture of a man's jealous rage in the first Acts, but in the fifth he was worthy to be loved by Hermione. The dignity of this Act was worth the audience of Kings and Princes, as the First Gentleman says in it with a different meaning.

## THE WINTER'S TALE

The fourth Act is a Pastoral Comedy of the Rustics and knaves of an English countryside fair. It has the sweetness and ripeness of a *Midsummer Dream* and it shines in this Play like the episode of Marina in *Pericles* and the Interlude of Imogen's wanderings in the story of *Cymbeline*. Autolycus could have wandered with Jaques, singing in the Forest of Arden: he was too wise for the days when Shakespeare was beginning to write and too merry for his mood at the end.

The first three Acts have the mood of a Mediæval Romance and I see in their rawness a proof that they were written first in the days when he was young enough to conceive the first fantastic version of *Cymbeline*. Mr. Saintsbury writes: "There might be some reason for thinking *The Winter's Tale* Shakespeare's first experiment in very free redundancy and overlapping combined; perhaps one made very much earlier than is usually thought, and held back. Nor would this lack support in some non-prosodic aspects of the Play."

This Tragi-comedy had, I think, a Tragical ending in its earliest form. The first three Acts are still appropriate to a Tragical ending, but they are made Tragi-comical by the unforeseen radiance of a *Midsummer Dream*. A first end, which was imitated from Greene's *Pandosto*, seems still shown when Mamilius begins his story and says, "A sad tale is best for Winter." King Richard the Second thought the same when he said,

In Winter's tedious nights sit by the fire  
With good old folks, and let them tell thee tales  
Of woeful ages long ago betid.

Mr. Seccombe and Mr. Allen write of this Play and *Cymbeline* in their *Age of Shakespeare*: "Both these Plays combine an almost childish romance of plot, an utter disregard of plausibility, with most minute and finished realism in the presentation of individual figures or situations." It seems to me that these contrasts can only be explained by concluding that these Plays were written first when Shakespeare was young and revised when he was mature.

Coleridge in his *Notes on some other Plays of Shakespeare*, written in 1818, said that "*Cymbeline* is a congener with



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*Pericles*," and in his *Classification Attempted* of 1819 put *Pericles* after *Love's Labour's Lost*, which he took to be the earliest Play, and added, "in the same epoch I place *Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline*, differing from the *Pericles* by the entire rifacimento of it." In 1802 he had put *Pericles* in Shakespeare's first Epoch among "the transition-works, *Uebergangswerke*, not his, yet of him," and in his *Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton* of 1813 he had spoken of "the Play of *Pericles*, written a century before, which Shakespeare altered." In these opinions he disregarded the fact that Heminge and Condell had omitted this Play.

The Quarto edition of *Pericles* printed in 1609 (or bearing that date), described it as "the late and much admired Play called *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* . . . as it hath been divers and sundry times acted by His Majesty's Servants at the Globe on the Bankside. By William Shakespeare." Since it was a popular Play acted by His Majesty's Servants and was printed as Shakespeare's in four or five Quarto editions before 1623 Heminge and Condell must have been guided by some particular reason when they rejected it. It seems to me that they must have known either that Shakespeare had not written this Play or that he had wished to disclaim it. I think that there are at least three versions to be seen in this Play, an antiquated one and another founded on it and a hasty revision. If only this last version was Shakespeare's they may have rejected *Pericles* for that reason alone, or in that case he may have preferred that it should rest in oblivion because he had founded several other Plays on its Scenes.

Old Gower says in the beginning,

To sing a song that old was sung,  
From ashes ancient Gower is come,  
Assuming man's infirmities,  
To glad your ears and please your eyes.  
It hath been sung at festivals  
On Ember eves and holy ales,

Soon he breaks into irregular Verse,

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This Antioch then Antiochus the Great  
Built up, this city, for his chiefest seat,  
The fairest in all Syria :

I tell you what mine authors say :  
This King unto him took a fere.

In the second Act he declaims,

The good in conversation,  
To whom I give my benison,<sup>1</sup>  
Is still at Tarsus, where each man  
Thinks all is writ he speken can ;  
And, to remember what he does,  
Builds his statue to make him glorious.

He says after the dumbshow in this Act,

And he, good prince, having all lost,  
By waves from coast to coast is tost ;  
All perishen of men, of pelf,  
Ne aught escapen but himself.

And in the third Act he says,

By many a dern and painful perch  
Of Pericles the careful search,  
By the four opposing coigns  
Which the world together joins,  
Is made with all due diligence  
That horse and sail and high expense  
Can stead the quest.

I do not think that these old-fashioned verses were written in Queen Elizabeth's time. They are like many verses in *Confessio Amantis*, for instance,

Whereas with great devotion  
Of holy contemplation  
Within his heart he made his shrift . . .  
The Vice of Supplantacion,  
With many a false collacion,  
Which he conspireth all unknow,  
Full ofte time hath overthrow  
The worship of another man.

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If anyone writing in Queen Elizabeth's time could have imitated Gower so closely he would have done it throughout the speeches given to him. I think that these old-fashioned verses survive from a Traditional Play. They probably led Coleridge to think that *Pericles* had been written a century before, and Ben Jonson seems to have considered them old when he wrote in the Prologue to *Volpone*,

Nor hailes he in a gull, old ends reciting,  
To stop gaps in his loose writing,

for this seems to refer to Gower's words

I do beseech you  
To learn of me, who stand in the gaps to teach you  
The stages of our story.

John Gower may have written his *Confessio Amantis* ten years before he changed his first dedication in 1393. When he began his tale of Appollinus, Prince of Tyre in the Eighth Book he wrote,

Of a Chronique in days gone,  
The which is cleped Panteon,  
In love's cause I rede thus.

This Chronicle, Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon*, written in the Twelfth Century, borrowed the tale from the Greek Romance, *Apollonius of Tyre*, which may have been written in the First Century and now survives in a Latin version made in the Sixth. Chaucer in *The Man of Law's Tale* called the story—

As horrible a tale as man may read,

but the horrible beginning was only an episode in a tangled Romance. *Apollonius of Tyre* belonged to the group of Greek Romances which dealt with flights, captures, rescues, storms at sea, pirates and partings, and ended with marriages, as Nicetas Eugenianus wrote of *Charicles and Drusilla*. Mr. Gaselee writes of them in his Appendix on the Greek Novel, printed in the Loeb edition of Longus and Parthenius, "The most significant feature of the Greek novels is their un-Greek character. We can always point to Oriental



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elements in their substance, and almost always to Oriental blood in the writers. Sometimes it would almost seem that the accident that they were written in Greek has preserved them to us in their present form rather than in some such shape as that of *The Thousand and One Nights*." And it may be that *Pericles* shared an Oriental descent with *Titus Andronicus*.

The story of *Pericles* is all to be found in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, though the Prince is called Appollinus there and Thaise is the name of his child. Gower, for instance, tells of the tempest,

The storm arose, the winds loud  
They blewen many a dreadful blast,  
The welkin was all overcast,  
The dark night the sun hath under,  
There was a great tempest of thunder,

and of the sale to the brothel,

The master-shipman made him boun  
And goeth him out into the town,  
And proffereth Thaise for to sell.  
One Leonin it heard tell  
Which master of the bordel was.

Some Strolling Player, thinking only of pleasing an illiterate crowd, may have discovered the admirable contrasts of *Pericles* when he heard Gower's story, perceiving how the excitement of shipwreck and the humour of brothels and the triumph of Virtue could be fitly combined. Mr. Saintsbury writes of *Pericles* in his *History of English Prosody*: "It was evidently a derelict in some way. Not merely the extremely *décousu* character of the plot, and the absence of any distinct character-drawing, but the importance and peculiarity of the Chorus show earliness, and so does the Blank Verse, though this is not exactly of the earliest." It may be that *Pericles* was already a derelict when Shakespeare began.

In 1608 George Wilkins published a story called "*The Painful Adventures of Pericles, Prince of Tyre*. Being the true history of the Play of *Pericles*, as it was lately presented

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by the worthy and ancient Poet, John Gower." He invited the Reader "to receive this History in the same manner as it was under the habit of ancient Gower, the famous English Poet, by the King's Majesty's Players excellently presented" and he claimed that the Play was "a poor infant of his brain." We know nothing else about Wilkins except that he helped John Day and William Rowley to write *The Travaile of Three English Brothers* which was printed in 1607, and wrote a Play called *The Miseries of an Enforced Marriage* which was printed in the same year. If he wrote *Pericles* he deserved to be ranked with Shakespeare and Marlowe; but nothing else written by him justifies this. It is possible that he revised an old Play or that he helped to write a version of it twenty years before 1608 (since we do not know when he was born); but his other work seems a sufficient proof that the beauty of *Pericles* was out of his reach.

The title of his story suggests that he based it on Laurence Twine's "*Pattern of Painful Adventures* containing the most excellent, pleasant and variable History of the Strange Accidents that befell unto Prince Apollonius, the Lady Lucina his wife and Tharsia his daughter." And that book was first printed thirty-two years before 1608. If the Prologue to Ben Jonson's *Volpone* was spoken when that Play was acted in 1605, its mention of a gull reciting old ends may be a proof that *Pericles* had been seen on the Stage. But we cannot conclude that *Pericles* was old from the fact that Ben Jonson called it "mouldy" when he wrote of

Some mouldy tale

Like *Pericles*

in the Verses beginning "Come, Leave the loathed Stage," for he used that word to mean "bawdy," and Owen Feltham agreed with him when he said that some of Ben Jonson's Scenes in *The New Inn*

Throw a stain

Through all the unlikely plot, and do displease  
As deep as *Pericles*.

This Play is essentially young, and it is either the source

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of many of Shakespeare's Scenes or a repetition of them. If he was acquainted with a version of it when he was young, this would explain, for instance, why in *The Comedy of Errors* the first Scene of the fifth Act, when Ægeon recognizes the Abbess as his lost wife and says,

If I dream not, thou art Æmilia ;  
If thou art she, tell me, where is that son  
That floated with thee on the fatal raft ?

closely resembles the third Scene of the fifth Act of *Pericles* when the Prince sees the High Priestess of Diana at Ephesus, and why the brothel-scenes are so much alike in *Pericles* and in *Measure for Measure*, which is openly founded on a juvenile version. Other things which resemble *Pericles*, such as the restoration of wives in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, could have been derived from the story, which must have been commonly known like other Greek novels, for instance, the *Æthiopica* of Heliodorus of Emesa, which was taken to Sea by Pantagruel (according to Rabelais) and was remembered by the Duke in *Twelfth Night* when he said,

Why should I not, had I the heart to do it,  
Like to the Egyptian thief, at point of death  
Kill what I love ?

These tales, which may have sprung from the East, had been destined to be *Wonderful Things Beyond Thule*, like the adventures celebrated under that name by Antonius Diogenes. While these other apparent echoes of *Pericles* could have answered the story, they could also have repeated the Play, and this seems more probable.

Many students (for instance, Sir Israel Gollancz) have regarded *Pericles* as closely connected with *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. *Cymbeline* is linked with it by the mood of Imogen's adventure in Wales, and *The Winter's Tale* is connected with it by the mood of the fourth Act and so is *The Tempest* by the use of the storm and by the grace and the sweetness of those separate Episodes. Also these three Plays, like many others, retain the nature of the immemorial Romances.



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One obvious link between *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* is the use of the conventional lists of flowers chosen for their colours or names. In the first Scene of the fourth Act of *Pericles* Marina says,

No, I will rob Tellus of her weed,  
To strew thy green with flowers: the yellows, blues,  
The purple violets, and marigolds,  
Shall, as a carpet, hang upon thy grave,  
While summer-days do last.

In the fourth Scene of the fourth Act of *The Winter's Tale*, Perdita says,

I would I had some flowers of the Spring that might  
Become your time of day . . .

daffodils,

That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes  
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,  
That die unmarried, ere they can behold  
Bright Phœbus in his strength.

And in the second Scene of the fourth Act of *Cymbeline*  
Arviragus says,

With fairest flowers,  
While Summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,  
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack  
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor  
The azured harebell, like thy veins; no, nor  
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,  
Outsweetened not thy breath.

A model for all these had been set, for instance, in Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* when Venus said,

Amongst green brakes I'll lay Ascanius,  
And strew him with sweet-smelling violets,  
Blushing roses, purple hyacinths :  
These milk-white doves shall be his centronels.

The second of these three lists is plainly an imitation of

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Marlowe. The third is a revision or a form of the first and it is the only one in Shakespeare's last manner. The repetition in it would be explained if when it was written or revised, as we have it, Shakespeare had not intended to take the credit of *Pericles*.

Dryden recognized the young mood in *Pericles* when (referring to the belief that the Glastonbury Thorn blossomed at Christmas) he wrote in his Prologue to Davenant's *Circe*, printed in 1675,

Shakespeare's own Muse her *Pericles* first bore,  
The Prince of Tyre was elder than the Moor :  
'Tis Miracle to see a first good Play ;  
All Hawthorns do not bloom on Christmas Day.

It seems certain that Shakespeare could not have written *Pericles* after *Hamlet* or *King Lear* or *Othello*. Still, he might have revised a Play as young as *Titus Andronicus*, founded by him on a much earlier Traditional one and written in imitation of Marlowe, and this would have been the natural conclusion if Heminge and Condell had not rejected this Play. Of course, the fact that it was called his in the Quarto editions proves nothing, for several Plays which were not his (for instance, the *First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*, which was written by Munday and Drayton and others, and apparently printed in 1619, though it bears the date 1600) were ascribed to him with intent to deceive. The later belief that it was his may have been due to the Quartos or to a tradition that he had prepared a form of it for His Majesty's Servants. The Play, as we have it, bears signs of a revision by him after 1603. But I think that Heminge and Condell's rejection can only be explained by concluding that the Play was not his. Though they do not appear to have been equally scrupulous when they printed *King John* and *King Henry the Eighth*, this may have been due to the fact that those Plays were in the Chronicle Pageant which was founded on common property. No one ascribed *Doctor Faustus* to Dekker, or *Jeronimo* to Jonson, though they added some Scenes, and if Heminge and Condell had happened to know that *Pericles* was as old as those Plays and that Shakespeare had only retouched it (perhaps after a revision by Wilkins) they would not have ascribed it to him.

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Sir Israel Gollancz writes: "It is possible to differentiate no less than three styles in *Pericles*." The most charming of these is either Christopher Marlowe's or an exceedingly skilful imitation of him. Marlowe's music is repeated, for instance, in such verses as

Thou comest as a physician, Helicanus

or

A terrible child-bed hast thou had, my dear.

It may be that Marlowe, working with others, perhaps Peele and Kyd, shaped a version of *Pericles* from an old Traditional Play about the time when Shakespeare had written the first forms of *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*. This would account for a change in Shakespeare's manner of writing. And in that case the many things in other Plays which resemble *Pericles* were repeated from it, and this Tragi-comic Romance taught him how to write most of his Tragi-comical and Comical Plays in the same way as *The Spanish Tragedy* guided him when he began to write Tragedies. This Play may have shown him how to avoid the monotony of *Titus Andronicus* and to enliven his others, even his Tragedies, by contrasts and changes.



## THE PLAYS OF YOUTH

### II

SOME students who think that *The Tempest* is an elderly Play support this belief by contending that it is founded on *Pericles*, which they take to have been written by Wilkins in 1607. Mr. Dowden, for instance, thinks that Shakespeare retouched *Pericles* in 1608, and calls Marina's Romance a sketch of *The Tempest*. And the common belief that *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* are elderly work is partly derived from the theory that they should be taken as allied with *The Tempest*, which should be read as a farewell to the Plays.

The German students who held this theory had the excuse that the Tragical part of *The Winter's Tale* and the structure of *Cymbeline* appealed to their taste. Besides, they interpreted Shakespeare as if he was a German: Schiller might have dreamt of such work, and Goethe could have ended his task with a complacent farewell. The kindly German hearts of the days when Schlegel and his followers laboured with such zeal to explain Shakespeare to his countrymen found a pleasure in thinking that he had ended his work jolly and kind. So they linked these three Plays, which seemed master-pieces to them, as a proof that there was a sunny close to his life and that he emerged from the gloomy meditations of *Hamlet* to adopt as his motto "All's Well that Ends Well." They thought that the false happiness at the end of these Plays showed that he had lived to repent the truth of his Tragedies, and they discovered in them a last mood of reconciliation and pardon. But in doing this they overlooked the fact that this mood was not a new one to him, since it is as plain in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure*, *As You Like It*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, and they studied those Plays as if they were as German as their notion of *Hamlet*.

Sir Sidney Lee writes, "The composition of *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* may be best assigned to the Spring and Autumn respectively of 1610, and *The Tempest* to the

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early months of the following year." He bases this date for *The Tempest* on the metrical tests and the mood and, for instance, on his trust in the Book of Revels which mentions a performance at Court in November, 1611, and on his belief that Gonzalo quotes Florio's version of Montaigne and that Prospero's Island represented Bermuda. None of these things could show that *The Tempest* was not a revision of a juvenile form.

He writes of Prospero's Island: "Suggestions for these episodes reached Shakespeare from a quarter nearer home than Spain or Germany. In the Summer of 1609 a fleet bound for the new plantation of Jamestown in Virginia, under the command of Sir George Somers, was overtaken by a storm off the West Indies, and the Admiral's ship, the *Sea Venture*, was driven on the coast of the hitherto unknown Bermuda Isles." And Mr. Hamilton Mabie, in his *William Shakespeare*, writes: "In the Autumn of 1610 a great sensation was made in London by the arrival of a company of sailors who had been wrecked off the Bermudas, until that moment undiscovered."

Bermuda was known long before this. In *Hakluyt's Voyages*, printed in 1589 and reprinted with many additions between 1598 and 1600, we have Job Hortop's mention of passing it in 1570, and the accounts of the storm which the *Edward Bonaventure* met there in 1593, and of the wreck of a French ship on its rocks in the same year, and of Dudley's meeting "foul weather enough to disperse many fleets" there in 1595. And it has a place in the two Ruttiers preserved by Hakluyt: one of them says, "In the winter time go on the south side of Bermuda, and must go with great care because many have been lost here about this Island." Shakespeare may have known of this Island and of shipwrecks there when he was a child, and his use of the name Bermoothes, which is nearer to the discoverer's name, Juan Bermudez, does not suggest that he depended on the *Discovery* printed in 1610. "Discovery," of course, meant exploration, as it did when Raleigh published the *Discovery of Guiana*, a country which had been seen by Columbus, and when Ben Jonson called his *Discoveries* "*Explorata*," and told Drummond of Hawthornden that he intended to write an account of his Pilgrimage from London to Scotland and call it a Discovery.

## THE TEMPEST

The fact that Ariel was sent to fetch dew from the still-vexed Bermoothes is a proof that Bermuda was not Prospero's Island. Besides, Prospero told Miranda that their enemies

Hurried us aboard a bark,

Bore us some leagues to Sea, where they prepared

A rotten carcase of a butt, not rigged,

Nor tackle, sail nor mast,

when he was banished from Milan, and he said that Sycorax had been exiled to it from Algiers, and Ferdinand said that he was returning from Tunis to Naples, when he was driven on it, and Ariel said,

For the rest of the fleet

Which I dispersed, they have all met again

And are upon the Mediterranean flote,

Bound sadly home for Naples.

All this seems to prove that when Prospero was banished from Milan he made his home on a dream-island in the Mediterranean. Even if we accepted the theory that his Island resembled the one described in the pamphlets published in 1610, this could be explained by supposing that Shakespeare had introduced that resemblance in a later revision. Fortunate Islands and haunted ones had been famous in the legends and Poetry of the sea-going Nations from time immemorial.

There may be one link between Prospero's Island and the dreaded Bermudas. Job Hortop, in his account of his voyage with Diego Flores de Valdez in 1570, which was published by Hakluyt and may have been current before, wrote, "When we came in the height of Bermuda we discovered a monster in the Sea, who showed himself three times unto us from the middle upwards, in which parts he was proportioned like a man of the complexion of a Mulatto or tawny Indian. The General did command one of his clerks to put it in writing and he certified the King and his Nobles thereof." This monster may have suggested Caliban (whom Trinculo called "half a fish and half a monster") when Shakespeare remembered the old stories about a Magician and his innocent daughter and wished to provide them with company on their Fortunate Island.

It may be that Shakespeare drew Caliban, the land-fish



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who resembled a tortoise and had a very ancient and fishlike smell, from an Esquimaux brought to England by Frobisher in 1576 and then called an Indian. He may have heard him described or seen him exhibited in Stratford or London, alive or dead. Trinculo says, "When they would not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian. Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver : then would this monster make a man."

It may be that this picture of Caliban and the mention of Setebos, the Patagonian Devil, are signs of the early date of *The Tempest*. Several of the names in this Play are to be found in Eden's *History of Travels* which described Patagonia and was published in 1577. In 1610 Eden's book and the Esquimaux were things of the Past. Caliban's name is not to be found in it and Sir Israel Gollancz writes that "it is most probably a contemporary variant of Canibal, which is itself merely another form of Caribal, i.e. Caribbean." If this could be proved it would support the impression that *The Tempest* as we have it derides Montaigne's Essay *Des Cannibales*. Even in that case the name might have been given in a later revision. This derivation cannot be proved, and the name may have been found in a Spanish form of the story, for similar names (such as Oliban) are still used in Spain.

Prospero's farewell to his Magic has been interpreted as Shakespeare's to his. I do not believe that Shakespeare said good-bye to his dreams as if he was closing a shop. This farewell seems based on Medea's assertion in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,

Et silvas moveo, jubeoque tremescere montes  
Et mugire solum, manesque exire sepulchris.

Since these verses must have been familiar to Shakespeare in the days of his Youth, this echo of them may be a sign that this Comedy was first written then. And the renunciation of Magic was involved in the story. Perhaps he developed his Magician's farewell, making it his, when he said good-bye to his trade and to his fanciful dreams, turning to Tragedies, and saw himself as Prospero parting from the tricky sprite Ariel.

## THE TEMPEST

Ariel did not belong to Fairyland but to Magic as is shown by his name. Sir Israel Gollancz says that it is "of Hebraistic origin, and was, no doubt, derived from some such treatise as Heywood's *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels*.

The earth's great Lord  
Ariel, the Hebrew's Rabbins thus accord."

Ben Jonson wrote in the *Alchemist*, acted in 1610 :

And in the east side of your shop aloft  
Write Mathlai, Tarmiel and Baraborat,  
Upon the north part Rael, Velet, Thiel,  
They are the names of those Mercurial Spirits.

And when he wrote his Masque *The Fortunate Isles*, which was "designed for the Court on the Twelfth Night, 1626," he began it with Johphiel : "His Majesty being set, entereth in running, Johphiel, an aery spirit, and according to the Magi the Intelligencer of Jupiter's Sphere, attired in light silks of several colours, with wings of the same, a bright yellow hair, a chaplet of flowers, blue silk stockings and pumps and gloves, with a silver fan in his hand." He must have remembered that other Fortunate Island on which Prospero lived, and though he may have been glad to correct Shakespeare's inaccuracy by giving the proper Magical name to his Messenger, he may have attired him as he had been shown on the Stage.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* as we have it is akin to *The Tempest*. Oberon is in Prospero's place, and Ariel is Puck compounded with the Fairy who sings to him. When gentle Puck is sent to fetch Love in Idleness he replies,

I'll put a girdle round about the earth  
In forty minutes,

showing Ariel's activity, and he misleads Lysander and Demetrius unseen. And Prospero wrought his miracles through Oberon's Fairies. But Oberon's Court is happier than Prospero's Island : as Drayton said of it in his *Nymphidia*,

This Palace standeth in the air,  
By Necromancy placed there,  
That it no Tempest need to fear ;

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and *The Tempest*, as we have it, is darkened, for disillusion has supplanted illusion. Puck is a prose spirit; but Ariel is a Poem with wings. Still, Puck lives in *The Tempest* though he has been changed from Robin Goodfellow,—

Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.

Though Puck was able to take the disguise of a roasted apple at will he did not change his form in the Play; but Ariel, though he must have been acted by a boy, was intended to have no definite size. He could sing,

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:  
In a cowslip's bell I lie,

and could summon the elves to play with him on the sands. This vagueness of stature is one of the proper signs of a dream and may have been added when Shakespeare changed a boyish Romance partly founded on *Pericles* and on old stories of Magic which were current in Spain and Italy and probably sprang from Oriental tales, for Ariel resembles the Jinn who were released and employed in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*.

Mr. de Perott in *The Probable Source of the Plot of Shakespeare's Tempest*, printed in 1905, and Mr. Henry Thomas in *Spanish and Portuguese Romances of Chivalry*, printed in 1920, have shown the resemblance between this Play and the First Book of *Espejo de Principes y Cavalleros*, written by Diego Ortunez de Calahorra and printed in Spanish in 1562 and in English as *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood* about 1580. Shakespeare knew the book, for in the First Part of *King Henry the Fourth* he made Falstaff say, "We that take purses go by the moon and seven stars, and not by Phœbus, he 'that wandering knight so fair.'" In it there are Magicians, for instance, Artidor brother of Polidarca King of Phœnicia, and Polisteo elder son of the King of Phrygia, and there is an Island in which Polisteo lives with his two children while he practises Magic. And, as Mr. Henry Thomas says, "There is also the Island of Artimaga, named after its mistress, the most wicked and abominable



## THE TEMPEST

among women, who worshipped only the Devil, and had by him a son called Fauno, at whose birth she died. The Island passed to the son, and was known as Maniac Island, frequented by storms and legions of Devils."

If this island suggested Prospero's Island we cannot deduce the date of *The Tempest* from the fact that *A Discovery of the Bermudas* was printed in 1610. It does not seem probable that Shakespeare would have turned to the First Part of the *Mirror of Knighthood* in his elderly days, thirty years after it had been printed. This was a popular book when he was beginning to write, and though he made Falstaff deride it afterwards, it may have attracted him while he was still young.

*The Tempest* retains the atmosphere of the old story borrowed by Chaucer in his *Man of Law's Tale*, and by Gower in the Second Book of his *Confessio Amantis* from Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*. In the *Man of Law's Tale*, Constance marries the Sultan of Syria, as Claribel (whose name can be found in the *Mirror of Knighthood*) marries the King of Tunis, and she is twice set adrift as Prospero and Miranda and Sycorax were. According to Chaucer,

Years and days floated this creature,  
Throughout the Sea of Greece, unto the Strait  
Of Marok, as it was her aventure,

and afterwards

Floateth in the Sea in pain and woe  
Five year and more, as pleased Christ's hand,  
Ere that her ship approached unto land.

*The Tempest's* Geography is as hazy as Chaucer's, for Tunis is so distant from Naples that Claribel can have no news of her home

Till newborn chins  
Be rough and razorable.

This statement (which the return of the wedding-party disproves) seems one of the signs that *The Tempest* echoed the mood of Constance's impossible journeys and that its Characters dwelt "ten leagues beyond man's Life."

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The apparent growth of Ariel from Puck and the employment of Fairyland may show that *The Tempest*, as we have it, was partly based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Coleridge in his *Classification* of 1802 ranked *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline* last, but he put *The Tempest* between *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* in 1810 and before *As You Like It* in 1819. These changes must have been due to his recognition of *The Tempest's* resemblance to *As You Like It* in mood, and that resemblance would be explained if *The Tempest* ended a series of riper plays which began with the other vision of Fairyland. It may be that the first form of *The Tempest* was a story of Magic and that it was partly changed to a Fairy-tale, in which Ariel became a poetic version of Puck, after *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was reshaped as we have it.

The first Magical form seems suggested, for instance, by the story and by Ariel's name and by Prospero's farewell to his Magic and his final repentance, which is not told in the Comedy, as we have it, but in an Epilogue which clashes with it.

Tragedies of Magic were popular when Shakespeare was young. We cannot be certain when Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* were written. Sir Adolphus Ward says in his *Old English Drama*: "There is no reason against the assumption that *Friar Bacon* was written before February 1589—very possibly in 1588 or even already in 1587; after, and if so, doubtless very soon after, *Doctor Faustus* had been produced on the Stage." And Mr. Charles Gayley in *Representative English Comedies* says: "The period between July and the end of 1589 will probably cover the production of *Friar Bacon*, but the latter limit might include the Spring of 1590." Faustus and Friar Bacon repented. Faustus ended saying,

My God, my God, look not so fierce on me!  
I'll burn my books.

and Friar Bacon said,

Bungay, I'll spend the remnant of my life  
In pure devotion, praying to my God  
That he would save what Bacon vainly lost.

## THE TEMPEST

Remorse of this kind would be out of place in *The Tempest*, as we have it, and Prospero bids farewell to his Magic with a gentle regret. But the Epilogue has a different tone : in it he says,

Now I want  
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,  
And my ending is despair  
Unless I be relieved by prayer.

This Epilogue seems suggested by Gower's words in the fifth Act of *Pericles*,

Now our sands are almost run ;  
More a little and then dumb.  
This my last boon give me,  
For such kindness must relieve me.

It would be explained if *The Tempest* began as a fantastic Romance or Tragicomedy, a story of Magic written in imitation of *Pericles* about the same time as the first form of *Love's Labour's Lost* in the days when *Doctor Faustus* and *Friar Bacon* were first admired on the Stage.

It may be that Ben Jonson referred to a form of this Play in *Every Man Out of His Humour*, where Mitis asks "What's his scene?" and Cordatus replies "Marry, Insula Fortunata, Sir," and Mitis rejoins "Oh, the Fortunate Island! Mass, he has bound himself to a strict law there." If so this form may have been written in 1598, for Meres did not mention this Play and *Every Man Out of His Humour* was acted in 1599. This date would explain the close resemblance between *The Tempest* and *As You Like It*, in which there is another banished Duke and an equally repentant Usurper.

An innocent fantastic Romance with the sweetness of *Pericles* seems to survive in the satire and weariness of a final revision. It may be that this was written in Youth and rewritten with the wisdom and ripeness of a Midsummer Dream and again under the shadow of a Tragical mood. The alacrity of *Love's Labour's Lost* seems combined with the mellow mood of *Twelfth Night*: the Fortunate Island is as sequestered as the Forest of Arden, and Jaques sees the folly

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of Youth as soberly as Prospero does and turns away to hear solemn music, saying,

I am for other than for dancing measures,  
seeking with Prospero

A solemn air, and the best comforter  
To an unsettled fancy.

It may be that *The Tempest's* vague connexion with Italy and the success of the Comical Scenes in it and a ripening mood in which he began to learn the value of laughter led Shakespeare to Comedies. Heminge and Condell printed *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* after *The Tempest*, and then *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Much ado About Nothing* and *Love's Labour's Lost* before *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I follow Coleridge's classification of 1819 in adding to these the first forms of *The Taming of the Shrew* and *All's Well that Ends Well*. And I think that the first forms of the Story of Troilus in *Troilus and Cressida*, and of *Romeo and Juliet* and of the Choice of the Caskets in *The Merchant of Venice*, and of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and of Imogen's adventure in Wales in *Cymbeline* are united with them.

All these except the Story of Troilus and the Choice of the Caskets, were Comedies of Errors depending on mistakes and disguises. When Ariosto wrote his *Suppositi* as a Carnival play in 1509 (copying, as he said, Terence and Plautus and Menander), he set an example imitated in Italy first and in England when George Gascoigne wrote his *Supposes* in 1566. Italian vivacity and sharpness of wit and love of masquerading became fashionable in London instead of the horseplay and the simple buffoonery of the Traditional Stage. Shakespeare's Italianate Comedies were masquerades written in the mood of a Carnival. His turning to them seems a sign of an ambition to please the idle students of Law and other young men who sat in the boxes or galleries or on the stage, exhibiting themselves with the show, as well as the rougher men in the Pit. The Italianate youths in them resembled the "sharp wits"



## JUVENILE COMEDIES

described by Lyly in *Euphues His Anatomy of Wit* who indulged in "fine phrases, smooth quips, merry taunts, jesting without mean and abusing mirth without measure." These Plays were as fit for the Court or the Inns of Court as Lyly's had been, but when they were performed by the Players they must have seemed travesties or caricatures of the behaviour of gentlemen, and this must have helped the men and boys of the Pit to find amusement in them.

It may be that his first juvenile Comedy was the Story of Troilus. Sir Walter Raleigh writes of this in his *Shakespeare*: "The love-story is written, for the most part, in the style of *Romeo and Juliet* and the early Comedies with many similar phrases and jests." And he surmises that Shakespeare wrote it first as a Tragedy in imitation of Chaucer and then, finding the story unsuitable, "wrote *Romeo and Juliet* instead, and retained the go-between in the character of the Nurse, who is twin-sister to Pandarus even in tricks of speech." But it seems to me that Shakespeare neglected Chaucer's version and took his story from Lydgate's *Troy Book* or Caxton's *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*. The version to be found in these books may have led him to write it as a Comedy first. This form may have been suggested to him by the Story of Hector and it may have linked his early Classical Tragedies with his Juvenile Comedies. It may have suggested the stories of betrayal in them and in the *Sonnets*. And it may have been echoed in a first form of *Romeo and Juliet* with a fortunate end.

The *Two Gentlemen of Verona* does not seem to have been printed before 1623, but Meres cited it in *Palladis Tamia* in 1598 as the first of the Comedies. It may have been partly suggested by a couple of Plays, *Felix and Philomena*, which (according to the Revels Accounts for 1584-1585) was "acted before Her Highness by Her Majesty's Servants on the Sunday next after New Year's Day at night," and *Fidele and Fortunio, the Receipts in Love discoursed in a Comedy of Two Italian Gentlemen*, which was probably written by Anthony Munday and was printed in 1585. *Felix and Philomena* seems to have been founded on a Castilian Pastoral

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story, *Diana Enamorada*, written by Jorge de Montemayor or Montemôr, which may have been translated in 1583; and *Fidele and Fortunio* copied Luigi Pasqualigo's *Fidele*, printed in 1576.

These Plays may have led Shakespeare to blend a Woodland Romance with an Italianate Comedy. These two strains were old, for the *Diana Enamorada* revived the mood of a Greek Romance, the *Lesbian Pastorals of Daphnis and Chloe* written by Longus in the Second Century, or at the beginning of the Third, and the Italian Comedies sprang from Ariosto's imitation of Greek and Roman Comical methods. The Italian strain in this Romantic Comedy may have been partly derived from Barnabe Riche's story of *Apolonius and Silla*, printed in his *Farewell to the Military Profession* in 1581 and copied from one of the tales in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*. The Scenes in the Forest near Mantua may have come from the *Tale of Gamelyn* which (though it does not seem to have been printed as Chaucer's till 1721) must have been current, for Thomas Lodge used it in *Rosalynde*. Or if Shakespeare wrote this Play or revised it about 1590 he could have found them in *Rosalynde*, or have borrowed the Woodland strain from Sidney's *Arcadia*.

These Scenes link *As You Like It* with this story of Italy. Valentine is like Jaques when he says,

How use doth breed a habit in a man!  
This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods;  
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns.

And these Scenes may have suggested the first form of that version of *Rosalynde*.

This young Play is as lyrical as *Titus Andronicus*, but it imitates Lyly instead of Marlowe and Kyd. In it Shakespeare's young Poetry is combined with the mirth as when Valentine says:

Oh, thou that dost inhabit in my breast,  
Leave not the mansion so long tenantless,  
Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall.

Mr. Masfield says that "it comes from the mood in which the *Sonnets* were written," and that "one of the noblest

## THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

things in this Play is the forgiveness at the end." This forgiveness is shown, too, in the *Sonnets*, and it is implied or expressed in every one of the Comedies. There was no room for it in the Tragedies, for it would have been fatal to a picture of Justice: the deceivers were pardoned in tales which were not meant to be true.

It may be that *The Tempest* would have justified Heminge and Condell's place for it by being the Prologue to the rest of the Comedies if it had not been revised with a wisdom which has left it an Epilogue. This Play is the Prologue now. Proteus was properly named, for he was destined to appear on the Stage in many disguises. When Julia said to her maid,

Gentle Lucetta, fit me with such weeds  
As may beseem some well-reputed page,

she set the example which Portia, Jessica, Viola and Rosalind followed. There is another favourite trick when Julia says,

Madam, he sends your Ladyship the ring,

and Silvia answers,

The more shame for him that he sends it me,  
For I have heard him say a thousand times  
His Julia gave it him at his departure,

and when Launce fooled with his dog (which may have been a performing one borrowed from a neighbouring show) and argued with Speed he prepared the way for Launcelot Gobbo and the Court-Jesters.

It may be that after this happy experiment in different strains Shakespeare wrote the first forms of *As You Like It* and *Romeo and Juliet* and of the Choice of the Caskets. Then, perhaps because Launcelot's fooling had been greatly admired, he may have turned to write Comedies which were intended to win similar laughter.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as we have it, seems composed of three parts,—a Fairy-tale and a travesty of Rustical Players and a more mature setting of both for a performance at Court. The Interlude of the Rustical Players may have been the first of four Farces in which he echoed the boisterous

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humour of the Traditional Stage. These Farces, the Interlude of the Rustical Players and the *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Comedy of Errors*, are linked closely in mood, and this seems to suggest that they were written together.

Heminge and Condell printed *The Merry Wives of Windsor* the third on their list of Comedies. There are two Interludes or adventures in it. The Story of the Basket is one that might have been told by Rabelais or the Queen of Navarre and there are similar tales in *Notti Piacevoli* and *Il Pecorone*. The adventure in the Forest is English and it is a version of the Fairy-tale part of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The Character now called Falstaff in it is as much of a laughing-stock as Bottom the Weaver, but his adventures are Prose.

The usual belief that this Comedy was written to please Queen Elizabeth who had expressed a desire to see Falstaff in love is based on a suggestion first made by John Dennis in 1702. As a matter of fact, Falstaff is not shown in love, he is merely indulging in a vicious adventure with a couple of strangers: neither is he the Falstaff of *King Henry the Fourth*; he has nothing in common with that lovable Knight except his size and his name. William Hazlitt wrote in his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, "Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is not the man he was in the two parts of *Henry the Fourth*. His wit and eloquence have left him. Instead of making a butt of others, he is made a butt of by them. Neither is there a single particle of love in him to excuse his follies: he is merely a designing, barefaced knave and an unsuccessful one."

It does not seem possible that Shakespeare could have drawn this dull laughing-stock as a picture of Falstaff after Sir John had come to glorious life in his dreams. Mistress Quickly is Dr. Caius' servant in this Play and is a stranger to Falstaff till they meet in it and only resembles her namesake by some blunders in speech, and Justice Shallow is no more than a name. These three are at best crude sketches of the three who are living in *King Henry the Fourth*. And no writer ever drew his rough sketches after his pictures. All this seems enough to refute Dennis's guess, even if the



## THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

whole structure of the Play did not prove that it was earlier work.

The fact that the name Falstaff was used in *King Henry the Fourth* (after Shakespeare had ceased to call his Knight "Old-castle") has been cited as proving that this Play was written after that time. But Heminge and Condell called Fastolfe "Falstaff" in *King Henry the Sixth*. It may have been the laughing-stock's name in a form of this Play written before *King Henry the Fourth* or it may not have been his original name.

This Falstaff may have begun as a Fleming and this would explain why Mrs. Page says of him, "What an unweighed behaviour hath this Flemish drunkard picked, with the Devil's name, out of my conversation." If he began as a Fleming this may be a sign that a form of this Interlude (which may not have been the earliest) was based on the doings of the three German Devils who are now only mentioned. Even if we conclude that the Quarto's reading "cozen garmombles" had anything to do with Count Frederick of Mompelgard, this would be only a proof that this allusion was written after he visited Windsor in 1592.

This crude Falstaff may have been a caricature of some townsman of Stratford, as Sir William Bishop asserted (according to Oldys), or he may have been merely one of the natural butts of Farces, a very fat and very foolish old man. Shakespeare may have used the familiar names, such as Falstaff and Shallow, in a revision about 1599 because he wanted to profit by their renown. The title of the Quarto edition (which was printed in 1602 and 1619) proclaims that these Characters appeared in the Play: it runs, "a most pleasant and excellent conceited Comedy of Sir John Falstaff and the merry Wives of Windsor. Intermixed with sundry variable and pleasing humours of Sir Hugh the Welsh Knight, Justice Shallow and his cousin M. Slender. With the swaggering vein of Ancient Pistol and Corporal Nym." This edition is only half as long as the other and may give a form shortened to suit the Stage when the Interludes were shown as one Play. Shakespeare may have revised the second part of this Play, the Interlude of the adventure in the Forest of Windsor, for a performance at Court, perhaps at Windsor

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Castle ; but he could not have written this Comedy about the time when he wrote *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* or after the Comedy of Falstaff had been a foil to the Pageant of *King Henry the Fourth*.

*The Taming of the Shrew* was derived from the forty-fourth story in Don Juan Manuel's *Conde Lucanor*. Mr. Dowden has coupled it and this Play as "rough and boisterous Comedies" and Coleridge bracketed them in his *Classification* of 1802 and Gervinus coupled *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Comedy of Errors* among the earliest plays. These different views can be reconciled if these Plays were first written in the days when *The Comedy of Errors* exposed Shakespeare's rawness in Comedy. Perhaps Heminge and Condell separated *The Taming of the Shrew* from the others because it was governed by the later Induction, as they may have ranked *A Midsummer Night's Dream* according to the date of the setting added to it.

It may be that they put *Measure for Measure* before *The Comedy of Errors* according to the date of a form of it which was founded on *Pericles* and on a Play printed in 1578, *Promos and Cassandra*, by Whetstone. *Measure for Measure* was made noble and sorrowful in a final revision ; but it retains the first form which Mr. Saintsbury, for instance, discerns. The tale in this was Italian and so was the cynical and pitiless mood. And a first form of *Twelfth Night* may have been written as a companion to it. That Comedy is sweet and mature and there is no trace of any rawness in it ; but Angelo and Malvolio are brothers and both of them are tricked and derided and the disguises and mistakes in it leave it a Comedy of Errors combined with a gay story of love and with a cruel deception.

*The Comedy of Errors* appears to have been partly founded on the story of *Pericles*, for it has a tale of a shipwreck and a lost child and a wife believed to be dead who is restored at the end. The first form of this Comedy may have been written as an imitation of *Pericles* and this may have been changed to a travesty of Gascoigne's *Supposes*. It is not known to have been printed before 1623, but there are no

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

signs of an elderly revision in it : I think that Shakespeare left it little changed at the end because he valued it little and that it was revised, as we have it, in 1594 to suit the taste of the students who belonged to Gray's Inn. It was performed for them on an appropriate festival, Holy Innocents' Day (the twenty-eighth of December) in that year as we know from *Gesta Grayorum*: "After such sport *A Comedy of Errors* (like to Plautus his *Menechmi*) was played by the Players; so that night began and continued to the end in nothing but confusion and error; whereupon it was ever afterwards called The Night of Errors."

This Comedy, as we have it, was planned as a travesty of the popular Error Plays, for in it their theme was made frankly preposterous by adding the second pair of twins, the two servants.

The Comedy printed next by Heminge and Condell, *Much Ado About Nothing*, was published in 1600 in a Quarto edition. Meres did not mention it in *Palladis Tamia* (unless he referred to it as *Love's Labour's Won* which he cited after *Love's Labour's Lost*), and this has been accepted as showing that it must have been written between 1598 and 1600; but that argument fails if, as I think, Mr. Saintsbury is right in observing that Meres was only naming some instances of popular Plays. We have no other reason for disputing the place indicated by Heminge and Condell except the fact that the style and the Stagecraft in this Play are mature, and this might have been due to a revision about 1599. The heartlessness and shallow jocosity of the mood in this Play link it with the Italianate Comedies. The tale in it is allied with the one in *Measure for Measure*, as Davenant saw when he blended these Comedies in his *Law against Lovers*. It is based on one to be found in Bandello's *Novelle* and Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*. An English translation of Ariosto's version of it in the Fifth Canto of *Orlando Furioso* was printed in 1565 and seems to have been used in a Play acted by Leicester's Servants in 1574, according to the Revels Accounts, "My Lord of Leicester's men showed him matter of Panecia," and in another mentioned in them as acted in 1583, "a History of Ariodante and Gennora, showed before

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Her Majesty on Shrove Tuesday at night, enacted by Mr. Mulcaster's Children." The trick by which Margaret passes for Hero is to be found also in *Tirant lo Blanch*, which was begun by Johannot Martorell in 1460 and printed in 1490 in Catalan and was reproduced in Italian as *Tirante el Bianco* by Lelio Manfredi about 1538. It was used too in *The Mirror of Knighthood*.

When Shakespeare wrote the Play first he dealt with an old popular tale familiarly known when he was young. Such a subject might well have been chosen by him when he was writing his Comedies borrowed or imitated from Italy. The faults of this Play, the baseness and hardness of its impossible story, are radical: the merits, the skill and the brilliancy, are ornaments which may have been added when he had grown to maturity.

The story of Benedick and Beatrice seems a separate Interlude blended with a Play which resembles *Cymbeline* and *All's Well that Ends Well*. It may have been acted apart and this may have been why King Charles the First wrote the name "Benedick and Bettrice" under the title of this Play in his copy of the Folio of 1632 in the same way as he added "Piramus and Thisbe" beneath the title of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and why the Treasurer's Accounts for 1613 state that Burbage produced a Play called *Benedicke and Betteris* at Court and why Robert Burton in the edition of his *Anatomy of Melancholy* printed in 1628 added a note "like Benedict and Bettris in the Comedy." This was the famous part of the Play, as is shown, for instance, by Leonard Digges' Verses printed in John Benson's edition of *Shakespeare's Poems* in 1640,

Let but Beatrice  
And Benedick be seen, in a trice  
The Cockpit, Galleries, Boxes all are full.

If it was developed or added after Meres wrote *Palladis Tamia* this would explain why he did not mention this Play. If so, there may have been a revision about 1599, for William Kemp seems to have quarrelled with Shakespeare or with his associates in that year and it is known that he had taken the part of Dogberry.



## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

The English humour of Dogberry and his companions repeats the simplicity of the Rustical Players in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This part may have begun as a brief Interlude deriding the Watchmen, and this would account for their prominence in a tale of Messina. Dogberry is an alien in Sicily, like Bottom in Fairyland. This may have been a common theme on the Stage, for Ben Jonson wrote in his Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, which was acted in 1614, "And then a substantial Watch to have stolen in upon them and taken them away with mistaking words, as the fashion is in the Stage-practice."

*Much Ado About Nothing* is a composite Play (like so many others) and this accounts for the clash between its different moods. It may be that a form of it belongs to this time and that Heminge and Condell took it to be the principal one because a later revision only altered its style and developed the wit-combats between the secondary lovers in it. This may have been the story of Hero and Claudio told in an Italianate mood. There is a trace of a first form when Hero, who is afterwards as blameless as Imogen, says,

And truly I'll devise some honest slanders  
To stain my cousin with : one doth not know  
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

This may have been remembered from the Italian Romance in which the deception was devised by a lady (though in the Catalan *Tirant lo Blanch* it had been assigned to a man) and it suggests that the tale was to be as heartless as *Troilus and Cressida*. The employment of slander in this tale was repeated from the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* where Proteus says,

The best way is to slander Valentine  
With falsehood, cowardice, and poor descent ;  
Three things that women highly hold in hate.

The picture of shrewishness appears in this Play, though it is changed to be charming in Beatrice, as it did in *The Comedy of Errors*, where Adriana is drawn as a shrewish wife and her husband says,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Go thou,  
And buy a rope's end : that will I bestow  
Among my wife and her confederates.

There are traces too of juvenile work when Claudio emulates the Brothers in *Cymbeline*, reading an epitaph and singing a dirge by the tomb which he believes to be Hero's, and says,

Now unto thy bones good-night !  
Yearly will I do this rite,

before he goes to meet his new wife, and when Hero is restored from the tomb. The difference between this tale and the others in which wives are restored is that Claudio does not even pretend to take any pleasure in recovering her : he says "Another Hero" and then the merry story of Errors and Masquerading continues.

Some students have seen in this Play the Comedy called *Love's Labour's Won* mentioned by Meres. This would suggest that this Play and *Love's Labour's Lost* were written at about the same time, and the places given to them by Heminge and Condell would agree with that view ; but I think it more probable that *All's Well that Ends Well* was formerly called *Love's Labour's Won*.

Valentine says in the first Scene of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*,

It boots thee not . . .  
To be in love, where scorn is bought with groans ;  
Coy looks with heartsore sighs ; one fading moment's mirth  
With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights :  
If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain ;  
If lost, why then a grievous labour won ;  
However but a folly bought with wit,  
Or else a wit by folly vanquished.

These verses give the notion of Love in these Italianate Comedies. Nearly all of them could have been named *Love's Labour's Won* or *Love's Labour's Lost* or *Much Ado About Nothing*.

*Love's Labour's Lost* had as good a claim to be christened *Much Ado About Nothing* as any of these. The nominal

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

scene was laid in Navarre, and two of the chief Characters, Biron and Longaville were named after associates of King Henry the Fourth of France, who was King of Navarre from 1572 to 1589. This suggests that this Comedy belongs to the years before 1589 when the English regarded him as a Protestant hero before he changed his Religion. The true scene was also in France but it was in Rabelais' Abbey of Theleme, and another Character, Holofernes, was called after Gargantua's master. The mood too is like Rabelais', for this Play is a parody which we can read as a satire, if we want to be wise, instead of interpreting it by our recollection of the folly of Youth. It is a Comedy of happy young people exchanging silly retorts in the brief intoxication of Youth and in the glamour of moonlight. The answer to all wisdom is plain in it, "Dictynna, goodman Dull."

It was printed in a Quarto edition in 1598 with the title, "A Pleasant Conceited Comedy, called *Love's Labour's Lost*, as it was presented before Her Highness this last Christmas, newly corrected and augmented. By W. Shakespeare." This may indicate a revision about 1597. If so, this was carelessly done, as is shown by the survival of passages which he improved and expanded. He may have seen that a revision with a heavier hand would only deprive it of its irrational charm. Mr. Masfield says: "The Play is full of experiments. Some of it is written in a loose swinging couplet, some in quatrains, some in Blank Verse, some in the choice picked prose made the fashion by Lyly." It seems to me the Play is full of parodies rather: I do not see an experiment in "the preylful Princess pierced and pricked a pretty pleasing pricket," or in "More fairer than fair, beautiful than beauteous, truer than Truth itself, have commiseration on thy heroical vassal. The magnanimous and most illustrate King Cophetua set eye upon the pernicious and indubitate beggar Zenetophon." I suggest that Heminge and Condell's place for it furnishes a clue to its drift. Shakespeare did not linger to copy different manners; but he turned to mock the old ways and the fascinating follies of Euphuism.

*Love's Labour's Lost* is the *Don Quixote* of Euphuism, but the former love lived in Shakespeare as it did in Cervantes: he renounced,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,  
Three-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,  
Figures pedantical,

with Biron ; but he acknowledged with him,

Yet have I a trick  
Of the old rage : bear with me ; I am sick ;  
I'll leave it by degrees.

*Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet* are companions because they are lyrical and thrilling with Youth and happiness and the beginning of triumph. This may have been the time when he wrote his juvenile Sonnets. There are three Sonnets in this Play, one in the first Scene of the first Act, beginning,

Study me how to please the eye indeed,  
and another in the third Scene of the fourth Act, beginning,

So sweet a kiss the golden sun gives not,  
and a third in the same Scene, beginning,

Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,  
and there are many Quatrains which may have been quotations from Sonnets, such as Biron's words,

Oh, if in black my lady's brows be decked,  
It mourns that painting and usurping hair  
Should ravish doters with a false aspect,  
And therefore is she born to make black fair.

Here Shakespeare brought in the customary Braggart and Pedant and the Mummer's Plays of the Worthies and a Masque such as the English Gargantua, King Henry the Eighth, loved when (as the Stage-direction has it) "Enter Blackamoors with music ; Moth, the King, Biron, Longaville and Dumain in Russian habits and masked." And he ended his parody of them with another of the Traditional contests between Summer and Winter. In this he described the



## CYMBELINE

Seasons not as poets had feigned them but as he knew them to be,

When all aloud the wind doth blow,  
And coughing drowns the Parson's saw,  
And birds sit brooding in the snow,  
And Marian's nose looks red and raw.

Then, admitting the charm of the old ways he had mocked and saying good-bye to them, he concluded "The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo. You that way; we this way."

Some students have argued that this Play is a parody of Lyly's *Endimion*, which seems to have been written before 1587, though it was not printed till 1591. That Comedy may have also suggested the Fairy-tale part of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. It may have been helped in this by the Prelude to Robert Greene's *Scottish History of King James the Fourth* which may have been written before 1590. Mr. Woodberry doubts this in *Representative English Comedies*, saying that "If *James the Fourth* with its Oberon preceded *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—which is undetermined—it was an unique inversion of the order which made Greene always the second and not the first." But Greene should not have rebuked Shake-scene for stealing his feathers if he had paid him the same compliment, and in this instance he may have been only second to Lyly. The Fairy-tale part may have owed something to the Second Book of *The Faery Queen* which was printed in 1590 and was current in manuscript in 1589.

The mood of this Fairy-tale may have suggested Imogen's adventure in Wales while her new name Fidele may have been borrowed from *Fidele and Fortunio*. Imogen's harmless drug and her trance (which may have been copied from Boccaccio's *Decameron*) and her waking beside the dead body which she took for her husband's are all to be found in *Romeo and Juliet*. Mr. Saintsbury says of *Measure for Measure* in his *History of English Prosody*, "Shakespeare surely never drew Pompey *after* he had conceived his great Clowns and Lucio *after* he had drawn Benedick or even Sir Toby." In the same way instead of concluding that Shakespeare imitated

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*Romeo and Juliet* in a juvenile manner when he was elderly, I infer that the Tragical end of *Romeo and Juliet* sprang from the childish Scene in which Imogen awoke and believed that the headless Cloten was Posthumus.

Gervinus coupled *Love's Labour's Lost* with a lyrical version of *All's Well that Ends Well*. If that version was called *Love's Labour's Won* the name meant that Helena won the labour of Love and nothing else,—

If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain  
If lost, why then a grievous labour won.

Traces of that version are seen in the affectation of wit and the trick played on Parolles and when Helena says,

Ere twice the horses of the Sun shall bring  
Their fiery torches his diurnal ring,  
Ere twice in murk and occidental damp  
Moist Hesperus hath quenched his sleepy lamp,

and writes to explain her woes in a Sonnet,

I am Saint Jaques' pilgrim, thither gone,  
Ambitious Love hath so in me offended,  
That barefoot plod I the cold ground upon,  
With sainted vow my faults to have amended.

This Comedy was based on a story in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the ninth of the third day, "Giletta di Nerbona guerisce il Re di Francia duna fistola, domanda per marito Beltrano di Rossiglione." Shakespeare may have used the translation in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*. Helena's trick was used in the Greek Mythology and it had been repeated, for instance, in *Periander of Corinth*, written by Parthenius, who (according to Macrobius) was Virgil's tutor in Greek. The deception of Parolles in this Play may have been a separate Interlude of a Braggart's exposure.

*Romeo and Juliet* was printed in a Quarto edition in 1597 as "an excellent conceited Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet as it hath been often with great applause played publicly." The traces of revision in it are evident and admitted by all.

## ROMEO AND JULIET

The fact that the Nurse says, " 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years " may show that a form of her speech was written in 1591, for there was an earthquake in England in 1580. Apart from this possible hint we only know that this Play must have been first written in Youth.

It was probably founded on Arthur Broke's version of a popular story or on an English Play acted before 1552, for Broke in his Address to the Reader prefixed to *Romeus and Juliet* (which was printed in that year) wrote that he had seen the same argument " lately set forth on the Stage with more commendation than I can look for." Shakespeare may have used other Plays also, for instance, *La Hadriana*, by Groto, which was printed in Venice in 1583.

The story in these Plays was as old as *Apollonius of Tyre*. Ovid told it in the fourth book of his *Metamorphoses*, using the names Pyramus and Thisbe,

Juvenum pulcherrimus alter,  
Altera, quas Oriens habuit, prælata puella.

Xenophon Ephesius told it (perhaps copying Ovid) in his Greek Romance *Ephesiaca*, which may have been written in the First Century. Gower repeated Ovid's version in the Third Book of *Confessio Amantis*, spoiling it in his usual way, and omitting the fact which was the root of the tragedy "vetuere patres." In his story Piramus thought that Tisbe was dead and

Suddenly  
His sword all naked out he braid,  
In his Fool-haste, and thus he said,  
"I am cause of this felony,  
So it is reason that I die,  
And she is dead by cause of me,"

and Tisbe killed herself with his sword.

The same Tragical end had been related by Plutarch when he told how Antonius stabbed himself, thinking that Cleopatra was dead, and how she died for his sake, and this is one of the links between this young Play of young Love and that mature Tragedy of elderly Passion, *Antony and Cleopatra*. There may be another if Sir Walter Raleigh is right in surmising

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that this Play sprang from the Story of Troilus, for *Antony and Cleopatra* seems to have sprung from the last version of *Troilus and Cressida*.

This ancient story seems to have been linked with Verona by Luigi da Porto's *La Giuletta* which was printed in 1536 and was probably founded on one of Masuccio Salernitano's *Novelle* printed in 1476. Bandello developed *La Giuletta* in his *Novelle*, printed in 1554, and his version was put into French by Francois Boaistuau de Launay and was printed in 1559 as one of Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*. Arthur Broke based his rhymed version on the French one which Paynter employed in his *Palace of Pleasure*.

Mr. Masfield writes: "This Play is one of the early Plays, written perhaps before Shakespeare was thirty years old. It was much revised during the next few years; but a good deal of the early work remains. Much of the early work is in rhymed couplets. Much is in picked Prose full of quibbles and mistaking of the word. Another sign of early work is the mention of the dark lady Rosaline . . . here called by the same name, and described in similar terms, viz. a high forehead, a hard heart, a white face, big black eyes and red lips. Perhaps she appeared as one of the Characters in the early drafts of the Play."

The reappearance of Rosaline not only connects this Play with the *Sonnets* but also unites the first form of it with *Love's Labour's Lost*. In the first Scene of this Play Romeo enters worshipping Rosaline,

Oh, she is rich in beauty, only poor

That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store,

and Benvolio undertakes to cure him by showing another beautiful lady. Romeo says,

Show me a mistress that is passing fair. . . .

Farewell: thou canst not teach me to forget,

and Benvolio answers,

I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt.

No one ever began a Tragedy in this jocular way, but this might well have been the beginning of a Comedy which was



## ROMEO AND JULIET

meant to repeat *Love's Labour's Lost* and became the forerunner of the merry revision of *Much Ado About Nothing* in which Rosaline and Biron had different names, Beatrice and Benedick. This mood is unbroken during the first couple of Acts and till Mercutio is killed in the third. This form, I think, was used as the base of part of the second form of *Much Ado About Nothing* and was blended with a Tragical Comedy which *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* suggested. That form had linked *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* with *Cymbeline*, repeating the tricks of the innocuous drug and the supposed death and the waking and the return from the tomb. I think that Shakespeare blended these forms as the foundation of his lyrical descant. In the same way as he travestied the popular Error Plays in *The Comedy of Errors* and the old methods of Comedy in *Love's Labour's Lost*, he now mocked the fantastic foreign ways of expressing sorrow and pain. He was not writing a Tragedy when he made the Nurse say in the fourth Act,

O woe, O woeful, woeful, woeful day !  
Most lamentable day, most woeful day,  
That ever, ever, I did yet behold !  
O day ! O day ! O day ! oh hateful day !

and Paris rejoin,

O love ! O life ! not life but love in death !

and Capulet echo then,

O child ! O child ! my soul and not my child !

He was parodying Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* or copying a French fashion of Verse as light-heartedly as he echoed the Sonnets imitated from Italy, for instance, when the Chorus recited,

Now old desire doth on his deathbed lie,  
And young affection gapes to be his heir,

or Romeo said,

When the devout religion of mine eye  
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires ;

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And these, who, often drowned, could never die,  
Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars !  
One fairer then my love ! the all-seeing sun  
Ne'er saw her match since first the World begun.

It may be that he took these six lines from the end of a Sonnet which had been in his Sequence.

This Play is the nearest to the Poems of Love. It has the eloquent sorrow of the *Rape of Lucrece* and the young delight in beautiful things which is seen in the *Sonnets* and in *Venus and Adonis*. When Juliet hears that Tybalt is killed she raves in the manner of *A Lover's Complaint*. In this Play Friar Laurence, who is a repetition of Friar Patrick in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, strikes the natural note when he explains why Rosaline was callous to Romeo :

O, she knew too well  
Thy love did read by rote and could not spell.  
But come, young waverer, come go with me,  
In one respect I'll thy assistant be,  
For this alliance may so happy prove  
To turn your household's rancour to pure love.

This is the note of a Comedy which might have been christened *All's Well that Ends Well*, one in which the child Juliet was restored from the tomb, like the other innocent ladies, and the jolly old Capulet danced off the stage with the Nurse. Old Capulet (who is an Alderman of London disguised) and the Comical Nurse are out of place in a tale with an unfortunate ending. So are most of the Characters, including the lovesick boy Romeo and the amorous child who makes him forget Rosaline's coldness. Lope de Vega saw that such a story should end happily when he wrote *Castelvinos y Montesinos* ; but Shakespeare, when he revised it in the mood of the *Sonnets* and of the other Poems of Love, made it as wantonly pathetic as they are. He added a true Tragical note when Tybalt exclaims, "I was hurt under your arm," and Romeo answers, "I thought all for the best." This he repeated afterwards when Kent said in *King Lear*,

We are not the first  
Who with best meaning have incurred the worst.

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And this became a dominating note in this Play : every one means well in it now and every one has helped the calamity. But that calamity is only a chance which finishes the laughter in tears.

It may be that his Tragical ambition revived when he had succeeded in Comedies and that he turned aside to write the first form of *Coriolanus* and to revise *Titus Andronicus* as it was printed in 1594 before he made *Romeo and Juliet* end sorrowfully. This Play, as it was probably acted with Burbage as Romeo and Kemp as Peter and Shakespeare as the loquacious Mercutio, who was prepared to revive and join in the jig after the sorrows, and with Juliet performed by an English boy of her age, in an open-air theatre by daylight with a placard to show that it was a Tragedy of Midsummer Moonlight in romantic Verona, must have been Comical in spite of its eloquent recitation of grief. The sorrow in it is the mere wantonness of Youth. Shakespeare could have said with King Richard the Second,

Shall we play the wanton with our woes  
And make some pretty match with shedding tears ?

These Plays of Youth are all full of the high spirits of boyhood and whether they deal with Tragical or Comical stories they are careless and light. And as the King says in *Hamlet*,

Youth no less becomes  
The light and careless livery that it wears  
Than settled Age his sables and his weeds,  
Importing health and graveness.

When in *The Winter's Tale* the worthy Antigonus suddenly says, "I am gone for ever," and the Stage-direction adds, "exit pursued by a bear" we are no more moved than the first crowd in the Pit was while it laughed at the Clown's tale of his doom, which was probably the more comic because the bear had been recognized as a tame one from the neighbouring Bear Garden. Neither was Shakespeare moved by any grief for Antigonus or Lavinia or Imogen. The calamity of *Romeo and Juliet* is too sad to be true. The true things in this Play

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are the gaiety and the young ecstasy of Love in the Moonlight. This descant on Love is the climax of the Plays of his Youth in the same way as *Antony and Cleopatra* became the crown of his Tragedies.



## THE POEMS OF LOVE

**F**RANCIS MERES wrote in *Palladis Tamia*, printed in 1598: "As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare; witness his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugared sonnets among his private friends, etc." In the same year another tribute to Shakespeare was paid in Richard Barnfield's *Encomion of Lady Pecunia*,

And Shakespeare, thou whose honey-flowing vein,  
(Pleasing the World), thy praises doth obtain,  
Whose Venus and whose Lucrece (sweet and chaste),  
Thy name in Fame's immortal book have placed,  
Live ever you, at least, in fame live ever,  
Well may the body die, but Fame dies never.

In the next year he was praised in one of John Weever's *Epigrams* which were probably written in 1597,

Honey-tongued Shakespeare, when I saw thine issue,  
I swore Apollo got them and no other:  
Their rosy-tainted features clothed in tissue,  
Some heaven-born goddess said to be their mother;  
Rose-cheeked Adonis, with his amber tresses,  
Fair, fire-hot Venus charming him to love her,  
Chaste Lucretia, virgin-like her dresses,  
Proud lust-stung Tarquin seeking still to prove her,  
Romeo, Richard, more whose names I know not,  
Their sugared tongues and power-attractive beauty;  
Say they are Saints, although that Saints they show not,  
For thousands vow to them subjective duty:  
They burn in love, thy children, Shakespeare, het them,  
Go, woo thy Muse, more nymphish brood beget them.

And in the Second Part of the *Return from Parnassus*, which

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was printed in 1606, and was probably written between 1598 and 1602, he was described as one

Who loves Adonis' love or Lucrece' rape.  
His sweeter Verse contains heart-robbing life,  
Could but a graver subject him content  
Without Love's foolish lazy languishment.

These tributes agreed that Shakespeare had imitated Ovid in his Poems of Love, *Venus and Adonis*, first printed in 1593, and *The Rape of Lucrece*, first printed in 1594.

Another tribute was paid to him in 1614 by Thomas Freeman in his *Rubbe and a Great Cast* :

Shakespeare, that nimble Mercury, thy brain,  
Lulls many hundred Argus eyes asleep ;  
So fit for all thou fashionest thy vein.  
At the horse-foot fountain thou hast drunk full deep ;  
Virtue's or Vice's theme to thee all one is :  
Who loves chaste life, there's Lucrece for a teacher ;  
Who list read lust, there's *Venus and Adonis*,  
True model of a most lascivious lecher.

Only one of these tributes mentions some Sonnets and that reference sounds as if they were only known by repute as Poems written for friends. This would explain why Barnfield and Weever neglected them ; but they had been published with *A Lover's Complaint* five years before Freeman's verses were printed. We have no record that the *Sonnets* attracted any kind of attention in 1609, and when they were printed (with remarkable changes) in 1640 they seem to have been neglected again. This apparent neglect of the *Sonnets* is the only mysterious thing about the Poems of Love.

Many students have argued whether the third Earl of Southampton or somebody else was drawn in the *Sonnets*. If we could infer that Southampton was Romeo because Lord Montague was one of his grandfathers or that he was Dumain who is described as

## THE THIRD EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

The young Dumain, a well-accomplished youth,  
Of all that virtue love for virtue loved :  
Most power to do most harm, least knowing ill ;  
For he hath wit to make an ill shape good,

this would have nothing to do with the merits of *Romeo and Juliet* or *Love's Labour's Lost*. Still, if we could be certain that he was drawn in the *Sonnets* this would help us to guess when some of them were first written and would help to explain the mystification when they were published in 1609 and the changes in 1640 and the apparent neglect, and it would furnish a superfluous proof that the tale in them was not meant to be true. So it is worth while to bear in mind what we know of the young Earl of Southampton.

*Honour in his Perfection*, which may have been written by Gervase Markham, records of the second Earl of Southampton that "he was highly revered and favoured by all that were of his own rank, and bravely attended and served by the best gentlemen of those counties wherein he lived. His muster-roll never consisted of four lacqueys and a coachman, but of a whole troop of, at least, a hundred well-mounted gentlemen and yeomen." The third Earl of Southampton was as proud as his father, and his chief friends were always men of his rank, the third Earl of Bedford, the fifth Earl of Rutland and the second Earl of Essex for instance. In those days such Earls as these were treated with deference by men of high rank. Sir Fulke Greville relates how when Sir Philip Sidney had been insulted by the seventeenth Earl of Oxford Queen Elizabeth "presently undertakes Sir Philip, like an excellent Monarch, lays before him the difference in degree between Earls and Gentlemen, the respect inferiors ought to their superiors." And it is recorded that when the arrogant Sir Everard Digby was executed for the Gun-powder Plot he first bowed respectfully to the Lords who were standing near the scaffold and then, "with a show of equality," to the gentlemen there. In those days a rich gentleman of ancient descent could take pride in attending and serving one of the Great Earls, such as Essex or Southampton, who held the highest rank in a time when there was no Duke or Marquis in England.

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The four Earls of Southampton were melancholy and doomed to misfortune. It is recorded of the first Earl that "fearing he should come to some open painful end, he poisoned himself or pined away for thought." The second Earl, who was left fatherless when he was five, was prominent in the Catholic Plots and tried to escape from England in 1567 and was sent to the Tower, charged with High Treason, in the following year and again in the next, and was about to be arrested again when he died young after his elder son's death. The third Earl, who was left fatherless when he was eight, began gloriously but was destined to see his dearest friends perish and his dearest hopes fail. And Clarendon says of the fourth Earl that he was "by nature much inclined to melancholy, and being born a younger brother, and his father and elder brother dying upon the point together whilst he was but a boy, he was at first much troubled to be called 'My Lord' and with the noise of attendance, so much he then delighted to be alone. He had a great spirit: he had never any conversation in the Court or obligation to it."

In those days it was often said that the new owners of Monastic estates were under a curse. These four Earls owed their wealth to the fact that the first of them served King Henry the Eighth and was rewarded with two of the Great Abbeys, Beaulieu and Titchfield, both in the New Forest. Their chief home was Titchfield House by the Sea ("a right stately house" according to Leland), built from the ruins of the Abbey of Titchfield. And the Catholics looked on them as one of the families doomed by their homes and cited the fact that in each generation the elder son died before obtaining the Earldom.

The third Earl was brought up by his mother who was rigidly Catholic. If (as is probable) she believed in the curse, her fears must have been doubled by the fact that her father, Anthony Browne, the first Viscount Montague, held Battle Abbey, a home which has retained to our days the reputation for entailing misfortune. And the melancholy which overshadowed this Earl's life may well have begun when he was a child in Titchfield House with his mother and his only sister Mary, who afterwards married a belligerent Catholic, Thomas Arundel, the first Lord



## THE THIRD EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

Arundel of Wardour. He had Catholic masters, as is stated in Allen's Report to the Pope in 1583 which names the chief Catholic Lords, "the Earls of Cumberland, Oxford and Southampton, who is yet but a minor but under Catholic masters, and the Viscounts Montague and Morley." And his official guardian, Lord Burghley, sent him to Cambridge when he was aged about twelve.

In those days Catholics went to Oxford or Cambridge very young so as to finish their studies before they were sixteen, after which age they could only remain there if they took the Oath of Supremacy. But this Oath does not seem to have been exacted from the Lords at this time, so Southampton's early going to Cambridge may have been due to the fact that Burghley wanted to take him from his Catholic home and a life of solitude with his mother and sister. That life may have helped to make him effeminate, and he was probably guarded with excessive devotion because there was no heir to his title. His name was entered at Gray's Inn in London two years later, in 1587.

The palatial London home of his family, Southampton House by Chancery Lane, stood opposite the gate of Gray's Inn; but we do not know whether he lived in it then or at any time. It was famous then as a refuge for Priests. The informer Benjamin Beard, who seems to have been one of the Tichbornes, wrote in 1594: "This Butler was sometime chamber-fellow with one Harrington, that serveth the Lady Southampton, which maketh me guess that he is still harboured by him. They lay there, about eight years since, in Southampton House, next chamber to Robert Gage that was executed, and then he fled, being nominated to be of Babington's Conspiracy." And Father Anthony Tyrell (the wavering Jesuit who was three times reconciled to the Anglican Church), in his Confession printed by Father John Morris in his *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers* in 1875, admitted that he had alleged that John Ballard or Fortescue, one of the leaders of the Babington Plot, had stayed with Lady Southampton and he also avowed in it that he had said that "Fortescue's man, whom he brought out of Cornwall, and a little boy, which was Henry Wells his son," were lying then in Southampton House. The house seems to

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

have been leased for some years before 1591 to a Catholic named Swithun Wells. In his time it was often searched for Priests but in vain till in 1591 Father Jennings was caught there in his vestments. He and two other Priests and three laymen who were arrested with him were hanged and quartered at Tyburn (under the Penal Laws according to *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers*), and in the same year Swithun Wells was executed in Holborn between Southampton House and Gray's Inn for having harboured the Priests. This tragedy may have made the third Earl avoid the house afterwards: we know, for instance, that he was lodging in Drury Lane when he was a leader of the Essex Revolt. But it may be that the house belonged for life to his mother, who married Sir Thomas Heneage in 1594 when her son came of age, and Sir William Hervey of Kidbrook (afterwards the first Lord Hervey of Ross) in 1598 and died in 1607.

The young Earl was courted from the first by the Catholics because they expected him to rival his father as a champion of theirs and by their opponents because it was important to divert him from that. The students at Gray's Inn were conspicuous as friends of the Stage, and the brilliant newcomer must have been observed by the Players. We know that he was fond of the Stage, for in 1599 it was recorded of him that he and his friend Lord Rutland "come not to Court, but pass away the time merely in going to Plays every day." It may be that Shakespeare first saw him in 1587.

There is a chance that the young Earl may have stooped to admit a vague connection between them. He had been connected with Edward Arden of Parkhall in Warwickshire through the Throckmortons and Catesbys and Brownes, for Arden had married Mary Throckmorton. He would have valued this then because Arden, who had been executed in 1583, was ranked by the Catholics as one of their martyrs; and it is probable that Shakespeare could boast that through his mother he had been a cousin of Arden's. In those days remote connexions by marriage were still reckoned as cousinship, though that word seems to have lost the wider meaning given to it by Chaucer in the *Shipman's Tale*,

## THE THIRD EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

And for as muchil as this good man  
And eke this Monk, of which that I began,  
Were both two iborn in one village,  
The Monk him claimeth as for Cousinage.

Cousinship of this kind would have given a rich gentleman a right to be seen in Southampton's train when he rode or to follow him when he walked in the streets; but Shakespeare would have forfeited this because he was poor and because he was earning his livelihood by the trade of a mountebank.

Apart from this, Shakespeare may have been attractive enough to win a brief kindness from the arrogant boy. The *Sonnets* claim nothing more: they say,

But out, alack! he was but one hour mine . . .  
Thus have I held thee as a dream doth flatter,  
In sleep a King, but waking no such matter.

Southampton seems to have first attended the Court in 1591 when he was about seventeen. Queen Elizabeth took him into favour at once, partly because she always tried to win the affection of the Catholic Lords and partly because she loved the homage of boys when she began to be old. She was then about sixty, and the young Earl of Essex was the chief of her favourites. Southampton was soon recognized as one who might rival Essex, and when they accompanied her to Oxford in 1592 he was praised after the favourite in welcoming Verses,

Post hunc insequitur clara de stirpe Dynasta  
Jure suo dives, quem South-Hamptonia magnum  
Vendicat heroem, quo non formosior alter  
Affuit, aut docta juvenis præstantior arte.

The only tradition which links him with Shakespeare is recorded by Rowe in his *Account of the Life of Shakespeare*, printed in 1709: "There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of Shakespeare's that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William Davenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand Pounds to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A bounty very great and very rare at any time." Even if this story was true it would not prove that the Earl and the Player were on terms of equality, and it is open to doubt, for we have no reason to think that Shakespeare ever made such a purchase. He only paid sixty Pounds for his home at Stratford-on-Avon. It may mean that Southampton enabled Shakespeare to buy a share in his Company. This may have been done in 1594, in which year the young Earl came of age and Shakespeare was named as the first of the three Players summoned to Greenwich, and in that case the gift may have redeemed a promise made earlier, for instance when *Venus and Adonis* was printed in 1593. In any case the amount is incredible. Poets were not paid on that scale then; for instance, George Peele dedicated the *Honours of the Garter* to the eighth Earl of Northumberland in 1593 and (according to the Earl's House Rolls) was paid "as my Lord's liberality" three Pounds.

In *As You Like It* Shakespeare made Rosalind, speaking in the disguise of a boy, say: "He was to imagine me his love, his mistress, and I set him every day to woo me: at which time would I, being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles, for, every passion something and for no passion truly anything, as boys and women are for the most part cattle of this colour." He drew a youth of this kind in some of the *Sonnets* and in *A Lover's Complaint*; and in *Venus and Adonis* he drew a young boy, probably aged about fourteen, who might have grown into a youth of this kind.

Southampton was a rosy-cheeked boy with long auburn hair (as we know from his portraits painted a few years after this) like Weever's

Rose-cheeked Adonis with his amber tresses.

*Venus and Adonis* begins

Even as the Sun with purple-coloured face  
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,



## BRITAIN'S IDA

Rose-cheeked Adonis hied him to the chase ;  
Hunting he loved, but love he laughed to scorn :  
Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,  
And like a bold faced suitor 'gins to woo him.

"Thrice fairer than myself," thus she began,  
"The field's chief flower, sweet above compare,  
Stain to all nymphs, more lovely than a man,  
More white and red than doves or roses are ;  
Nature that made thee, with herself at strife,  
Saith that the world hath ending with thy life."

The same boy is described in *Britain's Ida*, a Poem which was published by Thomas Walkley in 1715 :

Among the rest that all the rest excelled,  
A dainty boy there wonned, whose harmless years  
Now in their freshest budding gently swelled ;  
His nymph-like face ne'er felt the nimble sheers,  
Youth's downy blossom through his cheek appears :  
His lovely limbs (but Love he quite discarded)  
Were made for play (but he no play regarded)  
And fit Love to reward, and with Love be rewarded.

High was his forehead, arched with silver mould,  
(Where never anger churlish wrinkle dighted),  
His auburn locks hung like dark threads of gold  
That wanton airs (with their fair length incited)  
To play amongst their wanton curls delighted ;  
His smiling eyes with simple Truth were stored,  
Ah ! how should Truth in those thief eyes be stored,  
Which thousand Loves had stolen, and never one restored.

His lily cheek might seem an ivory plain,  
More purely white than frozen Appenine ;  
Where lovely bashfulness did sweetly reign,  
In blushing scarlet clothed, and purple fine.  
A hundred hearts had this delightful shrine  
(Still cold itself) inflamed with hot desire,  
That well the face might seem in divers tire  
To be a burning snow, or else a freezing fire.

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

His cheerful looks and merry face would prove  
(If eyes the index be where thoughts are read)  
A dainty play-fellow for naked Love;  
Of all the other parts enough is said,  
That they were fit twins for so fair a head;  
Thousand boys for him, thousand maidens died,  
Die they that list for such his rigorous pride  
He thousand boys (ah, Fool!) and thousand maids denied.

His joy was not in Music's sweet delight,  
(Though well his hand had learned that cunning art)  
Or daintier songs to daintier ears to indite;  
But through the plains to chase the nimble hart  
With well-tuned hounds; or with his certain dart,  
The tusked boar or savage bear to wound:  
Meantime, his heart with Monsters doth abound,  
Ah Fool! to seek so far what nearer might be found.

His name (well known unto these woody shades  
Where unrewarded lovers oft complain them)  
Anchises was.

It may be that this Anchises of Ida is a picture of the boy who was called the Prince of the New Forest. Marlowe called Ida a forest in the fifth Scene of the Second Part of *Tamburlaine*,

In numbers more than are the quivering leaves  
Of Ida's forest, where your Highness' hounds  
With open cry pursue the wounded stag,

and the New Forest may have been Britain's Ida. Southampton always loved hunting and was famous for horsemanship. *Venus and Adonis* may have been current in manuscript before publication, as many other Poems were then and, like *Britain's Ida*, may have been written while he was young enough to prefer horses to ladies.

The probable resemblance between Southampton and Adonis proves little, for Adonis was often called rose-cheeked as by Marlowe, for instance, in his fragment of *Hero and Leander*. Neither can we be certain that he was drawn as

## HERO AND LEANDER

the effeminate youth with rosy cheeks and brown hair who was described in the *Sonnets* :

A woman's face, with Nature's own hand painted,  
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion. . . .  
Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee  
Calls back the lovely April of her prime. . . .  
The lily I condemned for thy hand,  
And buds of marjoram had stolen thy hair :  
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,  
One blushing shame, another white despair.

Amorous youths were often drawn effeminate then like Marlowe's Leander,

Amorous Leander, beautiful and young, . . .  
His dangling tresses that were never shorn. . . .  
Some swore he was a maid in man's attire,  
For in his looks were all that men desire.

It is possible that Leander was drawn from Southampton whose tresses were probably unshorn in those days. In the portrait of him at Welbeck, painted when he was about twenty-one, his hair is very long and his pride in it is proved by the fact that some of the tresses are shown dangling in front. This way of wearing his hair was fantastic, for it was not in the fashion, and Queen Elizabeth showed her disapproval of it when she said that she was glad that Ambrose Willoughby pulled some of his curls out during a quarrel at Court. Still, Leander may have been only a conventional type. But if we could conclude that Southampton was drawn deliberately as the seducer in *A Lover's Complaint*, who is like both Adonis and the youth in the *Sonnets*, it would become more probable that those two other pictures were intended for him.

Here is Sir Sidney Lee's account of Southampton's picture at Welbeck painted in 1595. (I cite him because he doubts whether Shakespeare wrote *A Lover's Complaint* and has not observed a portrait of Southampton in it.) "The eyes are blue, the cheeks pink, the complexion clear and the expression sedate ; rings are in the ears ; beard and moustache are at an incipient stage, and are of the same bright hue as the

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

hair in a picture of Southampton's mother that is also at Welbeck. But however scanty is the down on the youth's cheek, the hair on his head is luxuriant. It is worn very long and falls over and above the shoulder. The colour is now of walnut but was originally of lighter tint." He writes of his character: "Although gentle and amiable in most relations of life, he could be childishly selfwilled and impulsive, and outbursts of anger involved him, at Court and elsewhere, in many petty quarrels." And he quotes Bridget Manners' description of him in 1594 as young and fantastical and easily carried away.

Here is the picture in *A Lover's Complaint* of

One by nature's outwards so commended,  
That maidens' eyes stuck over all his face.

His browny locks did hang in crooked curls;  
And every light occasion of the wind  
Upon his lips their silken parcels hurls. . . .

Small show of man was yet upon his chin;  
His phoenix down began but to appear,  
Like unshorn velvet, on that termless skin, . . .  
His qualities were beauteous as his form,  
For maiden-tongued he was and thereof free,  
Yet, if men moved him, was he such a storm  
As oft twixt May and April is to see,  
When Winds breathe sweet, unruly though they be,  
His rudeness so with his authorized youth  
Did livery falseness in a pride of truth.

Well could he ride, and often men would say,  
"That horse his mettle from his rider takes;  
Proud of subjection, noble by the sway." . . .  
He had the dialect and different skill,  
Catching all passions in his craft of will.

That he did in the general bosom reign  
Of young, of old, and sexes both enchanted,  
To dwell with him in thoughts, or to remain  
In personal duty, following where he haunted. . . .



## THE SONNETS

Many there were that did his picture get,  
To serve their eyes, and in it put their mind,  
Like fools that in the imagination set  
The goodly objects which abroad they find  
Of lands and mansions, theirs in thought assigned :  
And labouring in more pleasures to bestow them  
Than the true gouty landlord which doth owe them :

So many have, that never touched his hand,  
Sweetly supposed them mistress of his heart.

Sir Sidney Lee writes : " Shakespeare's many references to his youth's painted counterfeit suggest that his hero often sat for his portrait. Southampton's countenance survives in probably more canvases than that of any of his contemporaries." Shakespeare may have been one of the many who got the boy's picture when he wrote in the *Sonnets*,

With my love's picture then my eye doth feast,  
And to the painted banquet bids my heart.

If we could be sure that Southampton was the boy in the *Sonnets* we could infer that some of them were written about 1590 and many of them would be explained. The *Sonnets* advising marriage may have referred to his reluctance to marry Elizabeth Vere in 1590. The verses

Three beauteous Springs to yellow Autumn turned,  
In process of the Seasons have I seen,  
Three Aprils' perfumes in three hot Junes burned  
Since first I saw you fresh which yet are green

may have referred to a meeting three years before, in 1587. The verse

A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,  
instead of referring mysteriously to the fact that the Earl of Essex was also Earl of Ewe (as Gerald Massey suggested) or denoting that the boy was named William Hughes or that Southampton controlled the Hue and Cry in the New Forest may merely mean that like the seducer in *A Lover's Complaint* he could turn red or white

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

As it best deceives  
To blush at speeches rank, to weep at woes,  
Or to turn white and swoond at tragic shows.

The verses

The Mortal Moon hath her eclipse endured,  
And the sad augurs mock their own presage,

may refer to Queen Elizabeth's danger in 1588 when the Armada came and her emergence from it. Sir John Harrington in his *Nugæ Antiquæ* relates that Anthony Rudde, when preaching before her in 1596, "fell to treat of more plausible numbers, as 666 making Latinus, with which he said he could prove the Pope to be Antichrist, also of the fatal number 88, which being so long spoken of for a dangerous year, yet it had pleased God that year not only to preserve her but to give her a famous victory against the united forces of Rome and Spain." Some students have argued that this Sonnet implies that the boy had been imprisoned, but it probably means that the Poet's love of him had appeared "forfeit to a confined doom." This Sonnet may have been one of the earliest and written when the Poet took courage to proclaim his affection.

The question who was the Master-Poet might also be explained by this date. At this time there was only one poet of whom Shakespeare could write with such a show of humility, echoing Lyly's comparison of himself to a cock-boat and of Lord Oxford to a tall ship in his dedication of *Euphues and his England*,

My saucy bark inferior, far to his, . . .

I am a worthless boat,

He of tall building and of goodly pride.

This Poet was Edmund Spenser, who was called "Great Colin, chief of Shepherds all" in a sonnet by Barnfield printed in 1595. Spenser visited London during the Winter of 1589 and the Spring of 1590 to publish three Books of *The Faery Queen* and to find patrons for it, and during this stay he lived in Essex House in the Strand. We cannot be certain that he courted Southampton; but it would have

## THE MASTER-POET IN THE SONNETS

been natural. He may have written Poems to him which have been lost (like so much of his work) or may have drawn him as one of the Knights in the part of *The Faery Queen* which has survived or in the part which has perished.

He wrote

With golden quill,  
And precious phrase by all the Muses filed.

He was renowned for his learning: he wrote in *The Tears of the Muses*,

Each idle wit at will presumes to make,  
And doth the Learned's task upon him take.

And he called some of his Poetry "hymns" in the same sense as Ronsard did, as, for instance, in *Daphneida*, printed in 1591 and current before,

Colin, her own shepherd,  
That her with heavenly hymns doth deify.

The reference to "that affable familiar ghost" might be explained if we had his lost book *Dreams or a Sennight's Slumber*, or it may have referred to his inspiration by Chaucer, whom he addressed in the Fourth Book of *The Faery Queen* as "most sacred, happy spirit."

The first stanzas of *A Lover's Complaint* seem an imitation or parody of the beginning of Spenser's *Ruins of Time*,

There on the other side I did behold,  
A woman sitting sorrowfully wailing.

That Poem was probably written about 1590, for Spenser in his dedication of it to the Countess of Pembroke said that since his late coming into England some of his friends had blamed him for not lamenting his patrons late deceased, Sidney who died in 1586, Leicester who died in 1588, and Warwick who died in 1590. When he visited England again Sidney had been dead for ten years. If the beginning of *A Lover's Complaint* was a humorous copy of the *Ruins of Time*, this would agree with the notion that the Master-Poet may have been Spenser. And this notion would be supported if Mr. George Wyndham was right in thinking

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

that *The Faery Queen* was described in the verses in one of the Sonnets,

When in the chronicle of wasted time,  
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,  
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme,  
In praise of ladies dead and lovely Knights,

and if we could be sure that Shakespeare wrote the assertion in *The Passionate Pilgrim*,

Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch  
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense,  
Spenser to me whose deep conceit is such  
As passing all conceit needs no defence.

There would be little room for doubt left if we could be sure that Spenser wrote *Britain's Ida*. That Poem was published as his by Thomas Walkley, who wrote: "I am certainly assured by the ablest and most knowing men that it must be a work of Spenser's, of whom it were a pity that anything should be lost." Others have thought that it was not his because they have reckoned it unworthy of him (which is a poor reason, for it is only a trifle meant to flatter a boy) or because they considered him too holy to write it, but it is now known that he did not claim to be virtuous. In the Introduction to the Fourth book of *The Faery Queen*, which was written in Ireland after this stay in London, he wrote that Lord Burghley

My looser rhymes, I wot, doth sharply wite,  
For praising Love as I have done of late. . . .  
By which frail youth is oft to Folly led,  
Through false allurement of that pleasing bait.

Burghley's anger would have been justified if *Britain's Ida*, which is openly loose, had been written to please his ward, the young Earl.

An old story which is repeated in Mr. Percy Addleshaw's *Life of Sir Philip Sidney* relates how Spenser submitted the first Books of *The Faery Queen* to Southampton and was kept waiting while the Poem was judged, and how the Earl showed his delight by sending him twenty Pounds by a servant and soon afterwards twenty more, as he continued



## DEDICATIONS

to read, and the same sum twice again, but then cried, "Turn the fellow out of the house, for I shall be ruined if I read any further." This could only have happened in the Winter of 1589 or the Spring of 1590 before that Poem was published, and besides proving that Southampton was courted by Spenser, would show why he was not on the list of generous patrons.

Whether this story is true or not it is faithful to the ways of those times. Thomas Nashe wrote in *Pierce Penniless*, printed in 1592, "Men of great calling take it of merit to have their names eternized by Poets, and whatsoever pamphlet or dedication encounters them they thrust it up their sleeves and scarce give him thanks that presents it."

The men who wrote these dedications hoped to be paid for them by money or patronage, and some of them wished their other readers to think that they were on intimate terms with men of great calling: they could have said as John Dryden did when he dedicated *King Aribur* to Lord Halifax in 1691, "What I pretend by this dedication is an honour which I do myself to Posterity by acquainting them that I have been conversant with the first persons of the age in which I lived."

Southampton received his share of such dedications. Nashe, for instance, dedicated the *Life of Jack Wilton* to him in 1594, writing "a new brain, a new wit, a new soul, a new style, will I get me to canonize your name to Posterity if in this my first attempt I have been not taxed of presumption." And Barnabe Barnes wrote to him in 1593,

Receive, sweet Lord, with thy thrice sacred hand,  
(Which sacred Muses make their instrument)  
These worthless leaves which I to thee present. . . .  
Vouchsafe, right virtuous Lord, with gracious eyes,  
Those heavenly lamps which gave the Muses light,  
Which give and take in course that holy fire,  
To view my Muse with your judicial sight.

Gervase Markham addressed him in 1595,

Thou glorious laurel of the Muses' hill,  
Whose eye doth crown the most victorious pen,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Bright lamp of Virtue, in whose sacred skill  
Lives all the bliss of ear-enchancing men,  
From graver subjects if thy grave assays,  
Bend thy courageous thought unto these lines. . . .  
So shall my tragic lays be blessed by thee  
And from thy lips suck their Eternity.

And about the same time Nashe dedicated his *Choice of Valentines* to the Right Honourable Lord S. with an apology for wanton behaviour,

Pardon, sweet flower of matchless Poetry,  
And fairest bud the red rose ever bare,  
Although my Muse, divorced from deeper care,  
Present thee with a wanton Elegy.

This may have referred to the belief that the first Earl of Southampton married Stephen Gardiner's niece, and that Stephen Gardiner's mother was Jasper Tudor's illegitimate child. These things are open to doubt, but there is no other connexion between the Wriothesleys and the Red Rose of Lancaster. Nashe wrote in another Sonnet at the end of this Poem,

Thus hath my pen presumed to praise my friend,  
Oh mightest thou likewise please Apollo's eye!  
No, Honour brooks no such impiety,  
Yet Ovid's wanton Muse did not offend.  
He is the fountain whence my streams do flow. . . .  
My mind, once purged of such lascivious wit,  
With purified words and hallowed verse  
Thy praises in large volumes shall rehearse  
That better may thy graver view befit:  
Meanwhile it rests, you smile at what I write,  
Or for attempting banish me your sight.

Shakespeare's two dedications to Southampton were written in this conventional vein which Ben Jonson parodied in *Every Man in his Humour* in 1598:

To thee, the purest object to my sense,  
The most refined essence Heaven covers,

## DEDICATIONS TO SOUTHAMPTON

Send I these lines wherein I do commence  
The happy state of turtle-billing lovers ;  
If they prove rough, unpolished, harsh and rude,  
Hast made the waste : thus mildly I conclude.

Both were inscribed "To the Right Honourable Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield." The first, of *Venus and Adonis*, ran thus : "I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the World will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden, only if your Honour seem but pleased, I count myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather : and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest, I leave it to your Honourable survey and your Honour to your heart's content which I wish may always answer your own wish and the World's hopeful expectation."

And here is the dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece* : "The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end : whereof this pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your Honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours, being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater ; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship ; to whom I wish long life still lengthened with all happiness."

In this dedication the words "What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours" may be an echo of Virgil's statement to Pollio in the Eighth Eclogue, "A te principium : tibi desinam." Neither of these dedications can be taken as proving that the young Player was a friend of the Earl's unless we are prepared to conclude that the unfortunate Nashe (who had written *Pierce Penniless*, his *Supplication to the Devil* in 1592 and the *Apology of Pierce Penniless* in 1593 with a patent sincerity) was also his bosom-friend.

There is a dedication too in the *Sonnets* :

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage,  
Thy merit hath my duty strong knit,  
To thee I send this written embassy,  
To witness duty, not to show my wit:  
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine  
May make seem bare in wanting words to show it,  
But that I hope some good conceit of thine  
In thy soul's thought all naked will bestow it;  
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving  
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,  
And puts apparel on my tattered loving,  
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect:  
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee;  
Till then not show my head where thou mayst prove me.

This may well have been addressed to the same patron, but that cannot be taken as certain because the tone is conventional. There seems to be a more definite clue in the Sonnet beginning,

I grant thou wert not married to my Muse,  
And therefore mayst without attaint o'erlook  
The dedicated words which writers use  
Of their fair subject, blessing every book.

This may mean that the boy addressed in the *Sonnets* had overlooked a dedication to him, and we have no reason to think that Shakespeare had dedicated Poems to anyone except to Southampton. The dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece* proves that the former one had not been neglected. The first sentence in it, "The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end, whereof this pamphlet without beginning is a superfluous moiety," may mean that this was the second half of a tribute or that it was the superfluous (that is, the remaining) half a poem which had lost its beginning. *The Rape of Lucrece* has no beginning, the first part of its story is told in a shambling Prose argument and one of its chief Characters, Tarquin, is only described through his resemblance to Sinon. It does not seem probable that a young Poet striving for Fame would have planned this. It would have been explained if Southampton had been

Sinon, son of Simphron, posed as an escapee of the Greeks who then persuaded Priam to admit the wooden horse to Troy.



## THE RAPE OF LUCRECE

depicted as Tarquin, for (if so) he or his older friends might have objected to this, and the picture of Tarquin might have been struck out of the Poem and with it the beginning. In that case the dedication of the superfluous moiety might have been overlooked.

The Poet describes how Lucrece looks at the Tapestry :

She throws her eyes about the painting round,  
And who she finds forlorn she doth lament.  
At last she sees a wretched image bound,  
That piteous looks to Phrygian shepherds lent :  
His face, though full of cares, yet showed content ;  
Onward to Troy with the blunt swains he goes,  
So mild that Patience seemed to scorn his woes.

In him the painter laboured with his skill  
To hide deceit and give the harmless show,  
An humble gait, calm looks, eyes wailing still,  
A brow unbent, that seemed to welcome woe,  
Cheeks neither red nor pale, but mingled so  
That blushing red no guilty instance gave,  
Nor ashy pale the fear that false hearts have,

But, like a constant and confirmed devil,  
He entertained a show so seeming just,  
And therein so ensconced his secret evil,  
That jealousy itself could not mistrust  
False-creeping craft and perjury should thrust  
Into so bright a day such black-faced storms  
Or blot with hell-born sin such saintlike forms.

The well-skilled workman this mild image drew  
For perjured Sinon whose enchanting story  
The credulous old Priam after slew. . . .  
This picture she advisedly perused,  
And chid the painter for his wondrous skill,  
Saying, some shape in Sinon's was abused ;  
So fair a form lodged not a mind so ill :  
And still on him she gazed, and gazing still,  
Such signs of truth in his plain face she spied,  
That she concludes the picture was belied.

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

"It cannot be," quoth she, "that so much guile"—  
She would have said—"can lurk in such a look";  
But Tarquin's shape came to her mind the while,  
And from her tongue "can lurk" from "cannot" took;  
"It cannot be" she in that sense forsook,  
And turned it thus, "It cannot be, I find,  
But such a face should bear a wicked mind.

"For even as subtle Sinon here is painted,  
So sober-sad, so weary and so mild,  
As if with grief or travail he had fainted,  
To me came Tarquin armed : so beguiled  
With outward Honesty, but yet defiled  
With inward Vice ; as Priam did him cherish  
So did I Tarquin ; so my Troy did perish. . . .

"Such devils steal effects from lightless Hell,  
For Sinon in his fire doth quake with cold,  
And in that cold hot-burning fire doth dwell ;  
These contraries such unity do hold  
Only to flatter fools and make them bold."

Sinon bears a curious resemblance to the seducer in *A Lover's Complaint*, of whom it is said,

In him a plenitude of subtle matter,  
Applied to cautels, all strange forms receives,  
Of burning blushes or of weeping water,  
Or swoounding paleness ; and he takes and leaves  
In either's aptness, as it best deceives,  
To blush at speeches rank, to weep at woes,  
Or to turn white and swound at tragic shows :

That not a heart which in his level came  
Could 'scape the hail of his all-hurting aim.  
Showing fair nature is both kind and tame ;  
And, veiled in them, did win whom he would maim :  
When he most burned in heart-wished luxury  
He preached pure maid and praised cold chastity.

Thus merely with the garments of a Grace  
The naked and concealed fiend he covered ;

## THE SONNETS

That the unexperient gave the tempter place,  
Which, like a cherubin, above them hovered.

If we could be certain that Southampton was drawn as the seducer in *A Lover's Complaint* we could infer that he had also been depicted as Tarquin, who is now only seen through his resemblance to Sinon. And it must be admitted that the description of Sinon

So sober-sad, so weary and so mild,

could be applied to Southampton's portrait at Welbeck painted when he was aged twenty-one. All this may have been Shakespeare's young notion of a lover's complaint. In *Romeo and Juliet* he made Juliet complain of Romeo thus:

Oh serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!  
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?  
Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!  
Dove-feathered raven! wolvis-ravens lamb!  
Despised substance of divinest show!  
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st!  
A damned saint, an honourable villain!  
Oh, Nature! what hadst thou to do in Hell  
When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend  
In mortal Paradise of such sweet flesh?  
Was ever book containing such vile matter  
So fairly bound? Oh that deceit should dwell  
In such a gorgeous Palace!

And in the *Sonnets* he made the Poet complain:

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame  
Which, like the canker in the fragrant rose,  
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!  
Oh, in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose!  
That tongue that tells the story of thy days,  
Making lascivious comments on thy sport,  
Cannot dispraise but in a kind of praise;  
Naming thy name blesses an ill report.  
Oh, what a mansion have those vices got  
Which for their habitation chose out thee!

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

These denunciations may have been as short-lived as Juliet's. Even the boy in *Britain's Ida* was praised for inspiring affection which he did not return,

A hundred hearts had this delightful shrine  
(Still cold itself) inflamed with hot desire,  
That well the face might seem in divers tire  
To be a burning snow, or else a freezing fire.

And these lines resemble those in the description of Sinon,

For Sinon in his fire doth quake with cold,  
And in that cold hot-burning fire doth dwell.

All these complaints were conventional, and may have been copied from Chaucer, who, in the fragment called *The Squire's Tale*, made the Falcon denounce the Tercelet in similar grief :

There dwelled a Tercelet me fast by,  
That seemed well of all gentillesse ;  
But he was full of treason and falseness,  
It was iwrapped under humble cheer,  
And under hue of truth in such manere,  
Under plesaunce and under besy pain  
That no wight wende that he could feign,  
So deep ingrain he dyed his colours :  
Right as a serpent hides him under flowers  
Till he may see his time for to bite :  
Right so this god of Love's hypocrite  
Doth so his sermons and his observance,  
Under subtil colour and acquaintance  
That sowneth like the gentillesse of Love,  
As in a tomb is all the fair above,  
And under is the corpse, which that ye wot ;  
Such was this hypocrite, both cold and hot,  
And in this wise he served his intent  
That, save the Fiend, none wist what he meant.  
Till he so long had weeped and complained,  
And many a year his service to me feigned. . . .  
So on a day he took of me his leave,  
So sorrowful eke, that I weened verily



## A LOVER'S COMPLAINT

That he had feel'd as much sorrow as I,  
When that I heard him speak, and saw his hue,  
But none the less I thought he was so true  
And eke that he should soon repaire again  
Within a little while, sooth to seyn,  
And reason would eke that he must go  
For his honour, as oft it happeth so.  
Then made I virtue of necessity.

This last phrase, which is to be found, too, in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* :

Then is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,  
To maken virtue of necessity,

was echoed by Shakespeare when in *King Richard the Second* he made John of Gaunt say,

Teach thy necessity to reason thus,  
There is no virtue like necessity,

and when in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* he made the Second Outlaw say :

Are you content to be our General,  
To make a virtue of necessity ?

If the *Lover's Complaint* was a deliberate echo of the Falcon's lament there is the less need to infer that it was an accusation against Southampton, even if we conclude that he was drawn in that Poem. Neither need we suppose that he had played the part of Adonis if we conclude that William Barkstead's *Mirrha, the Mother of Adonis*, printed in November, 1607, lamented Mary formerly Countess of Southampton who had died in that year as Lady Hervey, and referred to him in its last lines :

But stay, my Muse, in thy own confines keep  
And wage not war with so dear-loved a neighbour,  
But having sung thy day-song, rest and sleep ;  
Preserve thy small fame and his greater favour,  
His song was worthy merit, Shakespeare, he  
Sang the fair blossom, thou the withered tree.

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

It may be that a clue to the meaning of all these Poems of Love is to be found in the note on *Willobie his Avis* in which the author explains that "in this discourse is lively represented the unruly rage of unbridled fancy, having the reins to rove at liberty, with the divers and sundry changes of affections and temptations which Will set loose from Reason can devise." That Poem was linked with Shakespeare (and perhaps with Southampton) by the lines in the Preface :

Yet Tarquin plucked his glistering grape,  
And Shakespeare paints poor Lucrece' rape.

The initials given, H. W. and W. S., may indicate Southampton and Shakespeare. H. W., whose name is given in full as Henry Willobie, is described as "Italo-Hispalensis"—an Italian Sevillian, or one who copied the manners of Italy and Seville. The statement that "he would see whether it would sort to a happier end for the new actor than for the old player" does not mean that W. S. was old, but that he was a former player of H. W's. part. Still, it may be meant to suggest that he was a Player by trade. The theme may have been a parody of the tale in the *Sonnets* and, if so, it is a proof that some of them were known when it was printed in 1594, in the same year as *The Rape of Lucrece*. And this would explain why this little book was reprinted in 1609. The note may mean that it derided the extravagant tales of the Temptations of Love which Will Shakespeare set loose from Reason devised.

If Shakespeare had Southampton in mind when he wrote some of the *Sonnets* and the Narrative Poems he might have excused himself as the Poet did in the *Sonnets* :

Or whether doth my mind, being crowned with you,  
Drink up the monarch's plague, this flattery ?  
Or whether shall I say, mine eye saith true,  
And that your love taught it this alchemy,  
To make of monsters and things indigest  
Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble ? . . .  
How can my Muse want subject to invent  
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my Verse  
Thine own sweet argument ? . . .

## THE STORY IN THE SONNETS

What is your substance ? whereof are you made  
That millions of strange shadows on you tend ?  
Since every one hath, every one, one shade,  
And you, but one, can every shadow lend.  
Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit  
Is poorly imitated after you. . . .  
Oh know, sweet love, I always write of you  
And you and Love are still my argument.

Whether he drew Southampton in these Poems of Love as a boy of fourteen and afterwards as an effeminate youth, or had some other model, or imagined the boy and the youth, it is evident that some of the Sonnets were written when he was young. It so happened that two of them were printed as his by Jaggard in *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1598 with one which came from *Love's Labour's Lost*. The second of these, beginning,

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,  
That like two spirits do suggest me still ;  
My better angel is a man right fair,  
My worser spirit a woman coloured ill,

tells the story about a dark lady and a treacherous friend which some students have taken as a statement of truth. This was a favourite theme, and there are similar stories in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and in *Love's Labour's Lost*. It was an Italianate story, and its mood was denoted by a line in this Sonnet,

I guess one angel in another's hell,

which is a humorous reference to one of Boccaccio's *Decameron* tales, the tenth of the third day, "Alibech diviene romita, ad cui rustico monaco insegna rimettere il Diavolo in Inferno." Instead of concluding that by a coincidence Shakespeare found this old story repeated in his private affairs and then proceeded to complain to the World that he had been betrayed by a friend I infer that he chose it as a conventional theme.

Some students have argued that he could not have written so passionately if the story was false ; but he wrote with as sincere an emotion, for instance, in *Macbeth* and *Othello*, and

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

we do not conclude that he had killed his King or his wife. He was aged about forty-five, and had written most of his Tragedies when the *Sonnets* were printed in 1609. Like Petrarch's *Sonetti* and Boccaccio's *Rime* they were written from time to time in varying moods. The moods tell us nothing about his private affairs, for no Lyrical Poem can ever be taken as a statement of truth: it may be that he wrote his most sorrowful Sonnets in his happiest times. Neither can we conclude that a real Love was expressed by any of them any more than we can be certain that a true Laura or Amaryllis was worshipped. As he wrote in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,

As imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the Poet's pen  
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

Ariosto need not have been telling the truth when (like a hundred other poets) he wrote in the Third Satire,

Altri vada a Parnaso, c'hora i'vegno  
Dolci occhi a voi; ne cheder altra aita  
A versi mei se non da voi, disegno.

Still, the manner and mood of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* can help us to guess when they were written. For instance, the two printed last by Thorpe and beginning,

Cupid laid by his brand and fell asleep  
and

The little Love-god lying once asleep,  
which may have been copied from a Latin translation of verses by Marianus Scholasticus, must have been written when he was beginning to write. They probably belong to the same time as the three Sonnets on Venus and Adonis, which were printed as his in *The Passionate Pilgrim*. These Sonnets may show that he began a Sonnet-sequence on Venus and Adonis before he wrote his Narrative Poem. It is probable that (like many other Poets) he wrote Sonnets in boyhood, and it is certain that many of those printed in 1609 were



## THE SONNETS

written when his mind was mature. For instance, the Sonnet, beginning

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,  
So do our minutes hasten to their end

has an elderly man's measured gravity and knowledge that life is passing away. Cervantes wrote in this mood when he was ending *Don Quixote*: "Como las cosas humanas no sean eternas, vendo siempre en declinacion de sus principios hasta llegar à su ultimo fin, especialmente las vidas de los hombres." And the Sonnet beginning,

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame  
Is lust in action,

which was probably based on the verses by Petronius Arbiter

Fœda est in coitu et brevis voluptas,  
Et tædet Veneris statim peracta,

seems an elderly comment of all the young tales of the Temptations of Love. If the *Sonnets* were printed in a rational Order, this should be the last of them all.

I think that the *Sonnets* of 1609 are a collection or selection which Shakespeare made when he had reached the climax of his Tragical work and that in a revision in his Tragical days some of the early ones became passionate instead of fantastic and the "dark lady" became a Cleopatra instead of the Rosaline of *Love's Labour's Lost*. Some of the *Sonnets* of 1609 are humorous Poems, for instance, the Will Sonnets which may have been addressed to some lady (perhaps his friend, Mrs. Davenant), who had a will of her own and a child christened William, and others are trifles; but many of them have a solemn maturity and a sorrowful passion which were alien to him when he was young. These darker Poems control the mood of the rest. But, even as we have them, the *Sonnets* keep a resemblance to the Narrative Poems. Mr. George Wyndham, for instance, though he looked on them as later work, wrote in his *Essay on the Poems of Shakespeare*: "It is indeed strange to find how much of thought, imagery and rhythm is common to *Venus and Adonis* and the *Sonnets*."

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

There would be nothing strange in this if, as I think, many of them were written before *Venus and Adonis* was printed.

I think that the conventional Sonnets about a beautiful boy and his behaviour in the Temptations of Love were first written when Shakespeare was young enough to choose such a theme and in the days when it was the fashion. The fact that in them the Poet described himself as elderly proves nothing, for this too was conventional. Richard Barnfield, for instance, wrote when he was aged about twenty,

Behold my grey head, full of silver hairs,  
My wrinkled skin, deep furrows in my face,  
Cares bring old age, old age increaseth cares.

Barnfield's Sonnets, like Shakespeare's, were written in the first person because this was the custom; but this did not mean that he drew himself as the elderly man or that he loved a beautiful Ganymede. Neither need we conclude that Virgil was worshipping a cruel Alexis when he wrote in the Second Eclogue (which seems to be copied from the Third and Eleventh Idylls of Theocritus),

O formose puer, nimium ne crede colori,  
Alba ligustra cadunt, vaccinia nigra leguntur.

Even if Southampton was drawn as the boy in the *Sonnets*, this would not prove that Shakespeare was shown in them as the elderly lover or that the adoration was real; but it would explain why some of the "sugared Sonnets" were only known among private friends (as Meres wrote in 1598), and why Shakespeare may have not intended to publish the *Sonnets* in 1609, for the fact that he had dedicated two other Poems to Southampton would have made the resemblance notable, and the amorous tone of them might have been misconstrued. The signs of revision in the *Sonnets* appear to prove that he wanted them to be published, and apart from this, any Poet who had written such things must have hoped that they would survive. He may have put them aside to be published after he and Southampton had passed beyond the insults of slander. There may have been an additional reason for such a delay in the fact that their tone was more apt to be misconstrued in those days. Some students have thought that

## THORPE'S EDITION OF THE SONNETS

an effeminate vice is suggested by the amorous Sonnets to a beautiful boy. In 1609 that vice was common at Court and the King himself was accused of it. And I think that Thorpe's dedication and Benson's changes are tokens that when the *Sonnets* were printed in 1609 they were interpreted as proofs of that vice.

Thorpe's dedication ran thus: "To the only begetter of these insuing Sonnets, Mr. W. H., all happiness and that eternity promised by our ever-living Poet, wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth.—T. T." It seems to me that this dedication to "the only begetter" was an obvious insult. Boswell and others have argued that the only begetter was the person who stole the *Sonnets* for Thorpe; but the Poet had promised eternity to the boy in the *Sonnets*, and not to a future only thief of those Poems. Mr. Knox Pooler, in his edition printed in 1918, has observed that the word adventurer is "an allusion to the Merchant Venturers, the insuing Sonnets being Thorpe's cargo." He did not observe the facts that Southampton was one of the chief patrons of the Merchant Adventurers to America, where his name is retained by Hampton River and Hampton Roads, and secured a charter for them in 1609, and was in that year a member of the Virginia Council. The words, "in setting forth," may be an allusion to Prince Hal's words, "How shall we part with them in setting forth?" and Poins' reply, "Then will they adventure upon the exploit themselves." In 1609 Southampton had made Catholic enemies by changing his Creed in that year (as Sir Edwyn Sandys recorded) while his triumphant feud with Lord Grey had already provided him with Puritan ones, and he had offended the King and the courtiers by his open disdain. He was living apart at Titchfield; but he had plenty of servants who would have been quick to avenge an open affront. So Thorpe may have thought it wiser to veil his dedication transparently by printing the Earl's initials as W. H. instead of H. W. He may have arranged the *Sonnets* to suit the meaning which he wished to allege, beginning with those which offered a clue to men who remembered that Southampton had twice resisted pressure to marry when he was young. He may have printed *A Lover's Complaint* with the *Sonnets* as a clue to the meaning of his

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veiled dedication because the picture of Southampton in it was easily recognized. And he may have meant it to be read as Shakespeare's Complaint. When Lintott reprinted Thorpe's book a hundred years later he called this fanciful poem *A Lover's Complaint of His Angry Mistress*, as if there was an inversion of sex.

When John Benson printed the *Sonnets* as Poems in 1640 he grouped them in a different order and under separate headings, and did this in such a way that nearly all of them seemed addressed to a woman, and omitted several, including the one which has the verses :

Oh know, sweet love, I always write of you,  
And you and Love are still my argument,

and the one beginning,

Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonness  
and the one beginning,

Oh thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power  
Dost hold Time's fickle glass,

and hid the sex in others, printing, for instance, "sweet love" instead of "sweet boy" in the Sonnet beginning

What's in the brain that ink may character  
Which hath not figured to thee my true spirit ?

In his Address to the Reader he wrote : " I here presume (under favour) to present to your view some excellent and sweetly composed poems of Master William Shakespeare, which in themselves appear of the same purity, the Author himself then living avouched ; they had not the fortune by reason of their Infancy in his death, to have the due accommodation of proportionable glory with the rest of his ever-living Works, yet the lines of themselves will afford you a more authentic approbation than my assurance any way can, to invite your allowance ; in your perusal you shall find them Seren, clear and elegantly plain, such gentle strains as shall recreate and not perplex your brain, no intricate or cloudy stuff to puzzle intellect, but perfect eloquence ; such as will raise your admiration to his praise." He seems to have



## BENSON'S EDITION OF THE SONNETS

amused himself by writing a part of this statement in irregular Verse, for he could have printed it thus :

Elegantly plain,  
Such gentle strain  
As shall recreate  
And not perplex your brain ;  
No intricate  
Or cloudy stuff to puzzle intellect,  
But perfect eloquence, such as will raise  
Your admiration to his praise.

His statement that these Poems had been in their infancy when Shakespeare died was untrue, and it suggests that he believed that all the copies of Thorpe's edition of 1609 (which he used in compiling his own, for he repeats its mistakes) had been successfully hidden. Shakespeare could not have avouched the accuracy of this tardy edition, which has many misprints and contains some Poems written about him after his death, so Benson's statement that he had avouched its purity may only have meant that he had claimed that his Poems printed in it were free from offence. And Benson's assertion that the Poems contained no cloudy stuff to puzzle intellect may have repudiated a meaning alleged. It may be that the last Earl of Southampton had employed him to hide a scandalous meaning insinuated by Thorpe. And in any case his alterations appear to indicate that the *Sonnets* had been interpreted in a scandalous way. We have no means of knowing whether they served their only possible purpose, for the *Sonnets* were neglected again till Lintott revived Thorpe's edition of them in 1709. Benson's edition may have been small and only intended as a safeguard against the reappearance of Thorpe's, or it may have been overlooked in the troubled times which began with the Earl of Strafford's impeachment in 1640.

None of this can be proved, but it seems the only way of explaining how Shakespeare's most admirable Poems, the *Sonnets*, came to be neglected so long. Though the old fashion of writing Italianate Sequences of Sonnets was dead (which was one of the reasons why it is improbable that

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Shakespeare would have written a Sequence in his elderly days) there were many poets and scholars, such as Milton and Herrick, who would have admired the *Sonnets* if these had not been hidden from them and many men, such as Suckling, who saw Shakespeare's supremacy, and we have no record that anyone quoted or praised or imitated the *Sonnets* till Lintott revived them in 1709. It seems to me that the neglect of the *Sonnets* of 1609 can only be explained by concluding that they were quickly suppressed. And if they were quickly suppressed by the man who had been drawn as the boy in them, or by Shakespeare, we can infer that a slanderous meaning had been given to them. But, of course, that would not prove that this interpretation was right. Even a plain statement from Thorpe would have been worthless, and his veiled dedication may have been only a publisher's ingenious advertisement.

One Poem ascribed to Shakespeare, *The Phœnix and Turtle*, belongs (if it is his) to the days when he could write of Love nobly. It was published in 1601 with "*Love's Martyr or Rosaline's Complaint*, allegorically showing the truth of Love in the constant fate of the Phœnix and Turtle." The title page of that Poem says, "Hereafter follow some poetical essays on the former subject, viz., the *Turtle and the Phœnix*, done by the best and chiefest of our modern writers, with their names subscribed to their particular works, never before extant, and now first consecrated by them all generally to the love and merit of the true noble Knight, Sir John Salisbury." This has been taken as meaning that Sir John Salisbury and his wife were the Turtle and the Phœnix, and this may have been an old view, for Father Henry More, telling a ghost-story in his *History of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, written in 1660, says "Lord Stourton called his wife, a daughter of Edward, Earl of Derby, and sister to the Stanley whose epitaph Shakespeare wrote." Sir John Salisbury's wife was Ursula Stanley, who is said to have been an illegitimate daughter of Henry, fourth Earl of Derby, but (unless the Records have been misinterpreted) she lived after 1601 and bore him some children though not till after that date. Father Henry More may have thought that Poems must be founded on fact, and (if he referred to this Poem) he was

## OVID'S EXAMPLE

probably wrong in thinking that Ursula Stanley and Anne Lady Stourton were sisters.

This Poem was stated to be a poetical essay written on a particular theme, and this dedication to Salisbury may have been merely a compliment without any reference to his private affairs. If Shakespeare wrote these beautiful Verses he never wrote anything else like them. If he was intimate with Jonson's friend Donne before he quarrelled with Jonson in 1599, he may have echoed Donne's brooding austerity. This is one of Donne's themes, as in *The Relic*, and in *The Funeral* in which he described himself as Love's Martyr.

This Poem (if indeed it is Shakespeare's) could not have been written by him when he was young enough and foolish enough to write the three Narrative Poems and the juvenile *Sonnets*, and to imitate Ovid as he did when he based *Venus and Adonis* on Ovid's *Amores* and the *Ravishment* or *The Rape of Lucrece* on Ovid's *Fasti*. When Francis Meres wrote that "the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare," he saw that Shakespeare could have pleaded (as Nashe did) that his juvenile faults were due to Ovid's wanton example,—

Yet Ovid's wanton Muse did not offend,  
He is the fountain whence my streams do flow.

And it may be that Shakespeare meant to plead this and to hail young Southampton as his "flavus Apollo" when he inscribed on the title page of *Venus and Adonis* the lines from Ovid's *Amores*.

Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo  
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.





## MIDSUMMER DREAMS

THE Editors of the First Folio printed seven Comedies after *Love's Labour's Lost* in the following order: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Winter's Tale*. It may be that all these were written or revised in this order during the ten years between 1593 and 1603 and that during this time Shakespeare rewrote *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Tempest*, and wrote his Chronicle Pageant and a version of *Troilus and Cressida* (in the War of the Poets) and forms of four of his Tragedies, *Timon of Athens*, *Othello*, *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*.

There were three seasons in his life as a writer, the Spring and Summer and Autumn. The juvenile Plays had all the charms of the Spring, a time of pleasant rain and promising light. Four of these seven "Comedies" belong to the time when it was Summer with him: they were mellow and happy, the light was mature in them and the rain was forgotten. But only the fourth Act of *The Winter's Tale* seems to belong to it and *The Taming of the Shrew* is a close version of a juvenile Play and *All's Well that Ends Well* became a Tragi-comedy later. And the Tragedies and Tragi-comedies written after 1603 were autumnal with the Winter at hand.

Sir Israel Gollancz writes in the Temple Shakespeare that several elements "manifestly connect *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the group of early love-plays, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Comedy of Errors*." And Mr. Saintsbury writes in his *History of English Prosody*, "Next to *Romeo and Juliet* there are strong prosodic reasons for taking *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." These views can be reconciled if this Play was composed from two earlier ones after *Romeo and Juliet*, as we have it, was written.

*Romeo and Juliet* had been a Tragedy of Midsummer Moonlight: it dealt with four nights of a fevered Summer in Italy, about a fortnight from Lammas-tide, the beginning

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of August. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was a Comedy of Midsummer Moonlight: it was meant to deal with four nights of England's temperate Summer, for Hippolyta says in the beginning,

Four nights will quickly dream away the time,

though this is no longer seen in the Play. It may be now mainly concerned with the Eve of St. John, the Midsummer Night on which the Fairies had power. These Plays are companions: the Fairy-tale is a humorous comment on the illusions of Love. The Woodland Comedy had another companion, the Woodland Tragedy of *Titus Andronicus*, and it is linked with *The Tempest* because they are Fairy-tales. Its woods and its pairs of lovers unite it with *As You Like It*; but that is an older Comedy seen with Jaques' eyes instead of Mercutio's. It is another *Comedy of Errors*, though these are caused by a Fairy spell and not by resemblance, and *The Taming of the Shrew* was connected with it by the Induction, though till then it had been more akin to *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*—Sly is dreaming awake, as Bottom is, and he and his friends could have acted an Interlude with Starveling and Quince: all these honest men could have figured among Falstaff's recruits and he was a minion of the moon in his turn. There are obvious links with other Comedies, too, but these are enough to afford an example of the way in which many of the Plays are united. None of them can be studied apart, for each is illuminated by others.

Shakespeare found his Fairies in England; but he gave them a King and Queen from foreign Romances. The Fairies of England were a miniature race, dwindled perhaps as the immemorial belief in the Wood-spirits had faded. Queen Mab was one of them in Mercutio's speech, as she was in Drayton's *Nymphidia*, which does not seem to have been printed before 1627, but may have been written at a much earlier date. Drayton says in it,

Then since no Muse hath been so bold,  
Or of the later or the old,  
Those elvish secrets to unfold  
Which lie from others' reading;

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My active Muse to light shall bring  
The Court of that proud fairy King.

He represented Oberon as married to Mab, as Herrick did in the *Fairy Temple or Oberon's Chapel*, published in his *Hesperides* in 1647; but this was an error, for Oberon was not one of our Fairies: he was imported by Chaucer from a foreign Romance, *Huon of Bordeaux*, and he was full-grown, like other foreign Fairies, for instance, Melusine in the *Mediæval Romance of Partenay*, which was printed in French in 1478 and in German about the same time and in Spanish in 1489 and translated into English in manuscript some twenty years later. Ben Jonson may have known better when he gave him no wife in his Masque *Oberon, The Fairy Prince*, which was published in his Folio of 1616, but this may have been due to the fact that Prince Henry acted the part. And in his *Particular Entertainment of the Queen and Prince*, written in 1603 and first printed in 1616, he wrote,

This is Mab, the Mistress Fairy,  
That doth nightly rob the dairy,

but did not give her a husband. Spenser copied Oberon's name from Chaucer, but Greene used another form of it, "Oboram," in the Prelude to his *Scottish History of King James the Fourth*; and a third version of it, "Oberion," was assigned to a dumb Devil who was said to have served Cardinal Wolsey.

Even in Chaucer's time Fairyland had faded away. *The Wife of Bath's Tale* began:

In the old days of King Arthour,  
Of which that Britons speken great honour,  
All was this land fulfilled of Faery:  
The Elf-Queen and her joly company  
Danced full oft in many a green mead;  
This was the old opinion, as I rede,—  
I speak of many hundred years ago  
For now no more can none see elves mo.

Here, of course, Chaucer used the word Faery as meaning enchantment, as Spenser did.

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Shakespeare found the name Titania in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where it is a form of Diana ; but in *The Merchant's Tale* Chaucer gave the Queen of Faery's name as Proserpina and this example was followed, for instance, in a song which was in Campion's and Rossiter's *Book of Airs*, printed in 1601,

In myrtle arbours on the downs  
The Fairy Queen, Proserpina,  
This night by moonshine leading merry rounds.

Chaucer's Proserpina was married to Pluto,—

Pluto, that is King of Faerie,  
And many a lady in his company  
Following his wife, the Queen Proserpina.

Sir Thopas in *The Host's Tale* was only seeking an Elf-Queen, and found one who was Oberon's wife,—

Me dreamed all this night, pardie,  
An Elf-Queen shall my Leman be.

It has been suggested that Chaucer remembered Artemis and Persephone when he made this distinction ; but it is more probable that he was copying the foreign Romances. Sir Thopas did not expect to find a miniature leman. That Elf-Queen was full-grown, like the fair ladies who wove their spells in the *Morte d'Arthur*, and when Bottom imitated Sir Thopas he was not loved by Queen Mab but by a foreign Titania who was big enough to be mated with him.

Though Puck was English by birth he was not one of the Fairies. A Fairy says to him in this Play,

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite,  
Called Robin Goodfellow. . . .  
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,  
You do their work, and they shall have good luck,

and Puck answers,

Thou speakest aright ;  
I am that merry wanderer of the night,  
I jest to Oberon and make him smile.



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He belonged to a bigger race of humorous spirits. Mr. Charles Squire says in his *Mythology of the British Islands*: "We shall hardly do wrong in regarding such spectres as the degraded gods of a pre-Aryan race, like the Irish Leprechauns and Pookas, who have nothing in common with the still beautiful, still noble figures of the Tuatha Dé Danaun." Puck dealt in practical jokes and he was a stranger among the innocent midgets who frolicked in Fairyland as the old Leprechaun was in Tyrnanoge, the Land of the Young.

The Fairy-tale part of this Play seems to have been first written in Rhyme, and I think that Shakespeare re-wrote it and blended it with the rest in the Autumn of 1594. That date seems suggested by Titania's account of the weather and by the signs that this Play was connected with a marriage and written for a performance at Court.

In 1594 the Summer was wet. Simon Forman's Diary states that "these months of June and July were very wet and wonderful cold. . . . There were many great floods this summer." Stow's *Chronicle* supports that assertion: "This year in the month of May, fell many great showers of rain, but in the month of June and July much more . . . all which notwithstanding in the month of August there followed a fair Harvest, but in the month of September fell great rains which raised high waters." And in King's *Lectures upon Jonas* it was said that "the Spring was very unkind by reason of the abundance of rains that fell; our July hath been like to a February, our June even as an April, so that the air must needs be corrupted: God amend it in His mercy and stay this plague of waters. . . . We may say that the course of nature is very much inverted: our Summers are no Summers, our Harvests are no Harvests." He disagrees with Stow on this point, and must have been right since there could not have been a fair Harvest in such weather as this. Titania in the second Act says:

Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,  
As in revenge, have sucked up from the sea  
Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land,  
Have every pelting river made so proud,  
That they have overborne their continents. . . .

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The fold stands empty in the drowned field, . . .  
The nine men's morris is filled up with mud. . . .  
The Spring, the Summer,  
The childing Autumn, angry Winter, change  
Their wonted liveries.

Oberon's speech in the second Act about Cupid aiming

At a fair vestal throned by the West

is plainly a compliment to the Queen who

passed on,  
In maiden meditation, fancy free

in her sixty-third year. It is the only one to be found in the Plays. This may show that the Queen disliked this compliment paid by a mere Player and a servant of hers to an old lady who had always been notoriously amorous, though she might have accepted such nonsense amiably as a gentleman's homage if it had been spoken to her privately by Essex or Raleigh. We know that even when some gentlemen acted a Device to amuse her in the following year at York House in the Strand she did not thank them for praise: Rowland Whyte wrote to Sir Robert Sidney, "the Queen said that if she had thought there would have been so much said about her, she would have not been there that night, and so to bed."

The Treasurer's Accounts for 1594-1595 state that Shakespeare and Burbage and Kemp presented "two several Comedies or Interludes" before her at Greenwich on the twenty-sixth and twenty-eighth of December, St. Stephen's Day and Innocents' Day. The setting of the Fairy-tale shows that the Play as we have it celebrated a marriage and the third Earl of Bedford was married at Stepney on the twelfth of December. While none of these indications would be conclusive if it was taken apart, their agreement leaves little doubt that this Play was one of the Comedies acted before the Queen in December 1594.

This Earl of Bedford was one of Southampton's dearest friends at this time: he was the friend coupled with him in this year as too young and fantastical to be a fit husband for Bridget Manners. We have no record that Shakespeare had been summoned to entertain the Court before this, and

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the fact that he was named first of the three leading Players may show that this summons was a favour to him. It is possible that Southampton rewarded his homage by obtaining for him the favour of a Royal Command.

Shakespeare was not concerned with the marriage except as Snug was when he said, "Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married : if our sport had gone forward we had all been made men." If he had wished to flatter a bridegroom he would not have chosen a mockery of the illusions of Love. It was his business to produce a Play suited to Queen Elizabeth's taste, and he may have taken the part of Oberon, leaving Theseus to Burbage and Bottom to Kemp, because he wished to recite the compliment which was paid to the Queen.

The Fairy-tale is spoilt by the setting, which was provided to please that superior audience, the Court, and to explain to it that the writer knew the Play to be foolish. The charm of the Comedy lies in its simplicity and juvenile sweetness, not in the wisdom of the older spectators who appear on the stage. The setting was made Classical to suit the Queen's taste. It was suggested to him by Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, in which Hippolyta was "the fair hardy queen of Scythia," and perhaps by the Life of Theseus in North's version of Plutarch, and it helped to denote that Oberon and Titania belonged to foreign Romances. It clashed with the English scene of the Fairy-tale and the farcical Interlude of the Rustics of England. The stage audience was Athenian because Athenian meant wise, and it may be that when Shakespeare put the Queen and her Court in the Athenians' place as spectators, he did this with the private amusement which he must have felt when he described her immunity from the dangers of Love. If he had merely wished to provide a superfluous explanation that Fairyland was not meant to be true he need only have copied Lyly's Prologue to *The Woman in the Moon* :

Remember all is but a poet's dream,  
The first he had in Phœbus' holy bower,

but his ironical setting turned his Fairies to ridicule as well as his Rustics.

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There are two separate Interludes in this Play as we have it. They were written apart, the Fairy-tale first, I think, and then the farcical one showing how Rustics acted a Tragedy.

It may be that the Fairy-tale was suggested to him by *The Cradle of Security* which (according to Willis' *Mount Tabor*) was acted at Gloucester about 1570 and may have been also exhibited in the neighbouring town of Stratford-on-Avon then. In this Interlude or Moral, a King or some great Prince was transformed while he was asleep by three ladies "who fastened a visard like a swine's snout upon his face, and then discovered his face that the spectators might see how they had transformed him." Or he could have been guided to it by the fact that the Mummers wore the heads of Apes and Asses and Swine.

Besides, such transformations belong to the World's stock of stories. There are many of them in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, for instance, in the Tale of the Three Calendars and the History of Sidi Nouman. And the belief in them is shown by an Arab Legend which tells how a Saint had a favourite Ass named Abdullah and how some evil men stole it and tied a Tailor instead and how, when the Saint saw the change, the Tailor alleged that he had been turned into an Ass for ten years as a penalty for beating his mother-in-law and had resumed his first shape during the night and how when the Saint, believing him, went to buy a new Ass he saw his own for sale in the market-place and exclaimed, "O Abdullah, Son of Iniquity! have you been beating your mother-in-law again?" Shakespeare may have known something about the most famous of all these stories, the one told in *Metamorphoseon Libri XI* (de Asino Aureo) by Apuleius, in which Lucius is turned into an Ass through a mistake but (unlike Bottom) prefers choice food to hay. Or he may have read the one told in Reginald Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, printed in 1584, according to which in the City of Salamin in the Kingdom of Cyprus an Englishman, "a sturdy young fellow," was turned into an Ass by Witchcraft and only rescued after three years when "being near to a Church, he heard a little sacring-bell ring to the Elevation of a Morrow Mass, and not daring to go into the Church, lest he should have been driven out with cudgels, in great devotion he fell



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down in the Churchyard upon the knees of his hinder-legs and did lift his forefeet over his head." Or the change might have been suggested to him by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or he may have known the old nursery-song which comes nearest to Titania's illusion :

There was a lady loved a swine :

"Honey," said she,

"Pig-hog, pig-hog, wilt thou be mine ? "

"Hunc " said he.

"I'll build thee straight a silver sty,

Honey," said she ;

"And in it, dearest, thou shalt lie."

"Hunc " said he.

"I'll pin it with a silver pin,

Honey," said she ;

"That thence thou may'st go out and in."

"Hunc " said he.

"So, Sweetheart, wilt thou have me now,

Honey ? " said she ;

"Speak quickly, or my heart will break."

"Hunc " said he.

The Farce of the Rustical Players seems to have been acted apart after his time, for "the *Merry Conceited Humours of Bottom the Weaver* as it hath been publicly acted by some of his Majesty's Comedians, and lately privately presented by several apprentices for their harmless recreation, with great applause" was printed in 1661. In Tate's *Cuckold's Haven*, which was printed in 1685, one of the Characters says, "Why I will act thee a better Play myself. What wilt thou have ? *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, or the *Doleful Comedy of Piramus and Thisbe* ? That is my masterpiece. When Piramus comes to be dead, I can act a dead man rarely. The raging rocks and shivering shocks shall break the locks of prison gates." And in *New Shreds of the old Snare*, printed in 1624, we have the reference, "as for flashes of light, we might see very cheap in the Comedy of *Piramus and Thisbe*, where one comes in with a lanthorn and acts Moonshine."

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This part appeared in the Play as it was printed in the Quarto edition dated 1600, which may have been published in 1619, but we have no means of knowing whether it was represented at Court. This is doubtful, for the Play, as we have it, seems too long for an Interlude and the Queen's interest in her Rustics was small.

The German *Absurda Comica Oder Herr Peter Squentz*, which was printed in 1663, has the same mockery of Rustical acting; but Andreas Gryphius claimed that this was not copied from a foreign example. The subject was an obvious one in Germany as well as in England since in both Countries the Rustics had acted Religious and other Plays for themselves from time immemorial. This Interlude, as it survives in a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, is plainly shortened, for instance in the first Act Quince chooses three Players who have no part in it now.

The story of Pyramus and Thisbe was popular. It had been printed, for instance, in *The Book of the Cyte of Ladies* in 1521 and again in 1562 "a book entitled Pyramus and Thisbe," and in *The Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* in 1578 and in a *Handful of Pleasant Delights* in 1584. Shakespeare could have found it in Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale* :

O noble Ovid, well sayst thou, God wot!  
 What sleight is it, though it be long and hot,  
 That he nyl find it out in some manere?  
 By Piramus and Thisbe men may leere;  
 Though they were kept full long streyte overall,  
 They ben accorded rowning through a wall"

or in the Third Book of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. Besides, he had probably read it in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and he had referred to it in *Titus Andronicus*,—

So pale did shine the Moon on Pyramus,  
 When he by night lay bathed in maiden blood.

He chose it as the theme of this Interlude because it afforded scope for mocking the shifts of Rustical Players. And he had an eye to the shifts of his own associates when they were compelled to act Moonlit scenes in the afternoon in an open-air theatre and to suggest so many things which could not be

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depicted with their scanty resources. He was mocking his trade, as he did when he drew the Players in *Hamlet*.

This was natural if he hoped that the Courtiers, or some of them, would remember that he was a poet and had claims to gentility though he had been driven to the trade of a mountebank. He may even have hoped that the Queen might have heard that he had published two Poems. When in the setting of this Play he described hunting and dogs in the fourth Act he expected some of his heroes (including Southampton) to recall how the poet of *Venus and Adonis* had proved his knowledge of horses; and this Comedy is written throughout as if it was the work of a man who merited a better employment.

He used the common device of a Play set in a Play as in *Love's Labour's Lost* and in *Hamlet*, and the device of a setting as when he re-wrote *The Taming of a Shrew*. The rhyming Play which survives in the Fairy-tale had been a companion to *Titus Andronicus*. When Hermia says,

And in the wood where often you and I  
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,

and Titania says,

Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,  
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,

they are innocently echoing Tamora's invitation of Aaron to golden slumber. This rhyming Play is full of echoes of Chaucer, for instance the music of the beginning of *The Merchant's Tale*,

Weeping and wailing, care and other sorrow  
I know enough,

is repeated when Hermia says in the third Act,

Never so weary, never so in woe,  
Be-dabbled with the dew and torn with briars.

The farce in Prose, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, which now only survives shortened and carelessly linked with it, had a later companion, the Comedy of *Falstaff*. These Interludes, each combined with a dissimilar one, were taken from life. The

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doings of Bottom and his friends were a comment on Fairy-land as those of Falstaff and his ridiculed Chivalry. These Interludes, like, for instance, the use of Lance in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and of Launcelot in *The Merchant of Venice*, and of all the Clowns and Fools and of the Rustics in *The Taming of The Shrew* and *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale* brought Shakespeare's Country in touch with the real life of his day. These were the true things in his work before he was ripe enough to attain the darker truth of his Tragedies.

The next Comedy in the Folio Order is *The Merchant of Venice* which would be a Tragi-comedy now if it was not controlled by Midsummer mirth, for the laughter in it is on the brink of calamity and the fortunate ending is a sudden escape. Indeed, as we have it, there is a Tragical story told in its laughter,—the Tragedy of Shylock the Jew, the old man who ends in disgrace, forsaken by the daughter he loved, robbed and betrayed, denying his Creed to purchase a miserable remnant of life.

This Play was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1598 and named in *Palladis Tamia* in the same year; but we have no means of knowing when it was written. Even the time of its publication is doubtful, for Mr. Greg and others have argued that the Quarto edition dated 1600 was printed in 1619. A Play called *The Venetian Comedy* was acted by the Admiral's Men in 1594 according to Henslowe's Diary, and this may have been a version of *The Merchant of Venice*. Shylock was one of Burbage's parts: his *Funeral Elogy* said,

Heart-broke Philaster, and Amintas too,  
Are lost for ever with the red-haired Jew  
Which sought the bankrupt merchant's pound of flesh,  
By woman-lawyer caught in his own mesh.

But we know that his Company acted with the Admiral's Men in 1594.

Some students have argued that *The Merchant of Venice* was first written in 1594 because Roderigo Lopez was executed then and have thought that Shylock was a picture of him. But Shylock could never have been a popular



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physician at Court. Bacon wrote in his *Report of Lopez' Treason* : " This Lopez, by nation a Portuguese and suspected to be in sect secretly a Jew, though here he conformed himself to the rites of the Christian Religion, had for a long time professed physic in this land, by occasion whereof, being withal a man very observant and officious and of a pleasing and applicable behaviour, in that regard, rather than for any great learning in his faculty, he grew known and favoured at Court." And he describes him as " though a man in semblance of a heavy wit, yet indeed, subtle of himself."

We have no portrait of Lopez, unless the " Chandos Portrait of Shakespeare," which looks like a picture of a Portuguese Jew and agrees with Bacon's description, should be reckoned as one. But all we know of him through his trial, when Essex and Antonio Perez hunted him down on a false charge, agrees with Bacon's account. It is probable that his real offence was a plot against Antonio Perez, for this would explain why Burghley tried to protect him. And there is no record that he was called a Jew before that.

It may be that the dislike felt for Jews was embittered by the statement that Lopez had been one of them secretly and this may have led to a revival of this Play in that year ; but the first form could not have belonged to this time.

In this Play, as we have it, a savage tale like *Titus Andronicus* is combined with the gaiety of the amorous youths in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and these opposite elements of the story are softened with a happy maturity. Shylock and his hatred are true and therefore the Play fails as a Comedy : it could only be one if he was interpreted as a farcical monster ; if we are allowed to behold him as a suffering man the laughter is spoilt.

It may be that Shakespeare wrote *Shylock's Revenge* as a Tragedy like *Titus Andronicus* when he was beginning to write, and the *Choice of the Caskets* as an Italianate Comedy in the days when he wrote *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and in a revision in 1594 blended them in a Comedy in which he made Shylock a real Jew instead of a bugbear. Perhaps Burbage was tired of the showers of bitten apples which showed the general detestation of Shylock and so asked for redeeming qualities ; or it may be that Shakespeare's greater knowledge

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of life and the sympathy which came with the years compelled him to make Shylock a man, though he knew that this broke the harmony of this *Midsummer Dream* in the same way as Malvolio's nobility made Sir Toby detestable. If Bottom had not been left farcical the beauty of his adventure would fade in the misery of losing his vision : he remained too dull to believe that he had been loved by Titania,

In sleep a King, but waking no such matter :

he says, " I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was ; man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream." And *The Merchant of Venice* can only be expounded by recognising that it was re-written in a different mood.

The legend of a murderous Jew demanding a pound of flesh and the story of the Choice of the Caskets may have been Spanish before they were Italian, for Jews were much more hated in Spain than in Italy and the Prince of Morocco has the pride and the gallantry of the Moors of Granada. Mr. Addington Symonds suggested that the cruelty seen in *The Jew of Malta* betokens the origin of that story in Spain, and the same cruelty marks *The Merchant of Venice* though it is softened when Shylock is allowed to survive. If this story had ended in its natural way Shylock would have been punished like his brothers in wickedness, Aaron the Moor in *Titus Andronicus* and Iago in *Othello* and Barabas in the *Jew of Malta* who dies boiled on the Stage. Barabas dies without wavering, saying,

I would have brought confusion on you all,  
Damned Christian dogs and Turkish infidels,

and so do Aaron and Iago ; but Shylock, who had been glaring with hatred and sharpening his knife on his shoe a few minutes before, breaks and cringes when he is foiled. This collapse and the scornful pardon it earns are appropriate to a Comical villain, a mere butt like Parolles.

Alleyne used to wear a false nose when he acted Barabas for the Admiral's Men, according to Samuel Rowley, who mentions " the artificial Jew of Malta's nose " in his *Search for Money* which was first printed in 1609, and we can conclude

## AS YOU LIKE IT

that Burbage wore one too and a red wig and red beard when he was acting as Shylock. The usurer must have been despised and repulsive to justify Antonio's scorn. Shylock was a caricature studied from life. There must have been Jews in London in Queen Elizabeth's time though the old Statutes which banished them were still unrepealed. That is proved by this picture, and besides in those days London was beginning to be a centre of commerce and a market of gold.

Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's tale of the Jew's savage demand and of his defeat by a lady had been printed in Italy in 1558. The tale of the Caskets had been printed in England in 1577 in Richard Robinson's version of *Gesta Romanorum*, and there had been many stories about penniless Christians converting and marrying the daughters of Jews. In this Play, as we have it, the Casket Scenes are apart and they are written in a different mood and with an open imitation of Marlowe. Shakespeare may have borrowed the notion of linking them with the crude Wager-story from a Play called *The Jew*, mentioned by Stephen Gosson in his *School of Abuses*, printed in 1579, as "representing the greediness of worldly choosers and bloody minds of usurers." His Jew shows the difference between him and his master : he watched some old money-lender setting his snares and held him to mockery ; Marlowe found his noble Barabas in his conquering heart.

While *The Merchant of Venice* keeps the hardness and shallowness of *Love's Labour's Lost* beneath its bloom of maturity these are not found in *As You Like It*, the Play which comes next in the Folio of 1623. This Play, like *Twelfth Night* and the fourth Act of *The Winter's Tale*, blends wisdom with laughter : these are the work of a man old enough to see Life as it is and young enough to take delight in it still ; there is humour in them instead of witty derision, and Shakespeare looks on his young lovers with Jaques in them, singing with Amiens,

Most friendship is feigning ; most loving mere folly :  
Then heigh-ho ! the holly !  
This life is most jolly.

This older mood indicates that years had gone by or that

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something had aged him. We do not know when *As You Like It* was written. It does not seem to have been printed before the Folio of 1623; but it is mentioned with *King Henry the Fifth*, *Every Man in His Humour* and *Much Ado About Nothing* in the Stationers' Register between entries in May and August, 1600. Coleridge put it in before *The Merchant of Venice* in his *Classification* of 1819; but the Folio Order is supported, for instance, where Antonio says in *The Merchant of Venice*,

I hold the World, but as the World, Gratiano,  
A Stage where every man must play his part,  
And mine a sad one,

and Jaques expands this familiar reflection into,

All the World's a Stage,  
And all the men and women merely Players.

The date commonly accepted, 1599, may be right, for this would agree with the entry in the Stationers' Register and with our safest guide, the mood in the Comedy. It may be that after Shakespeare re-wrote *The Merchant of Venice*, as we have it, he wrote as a companion to it a Tragi-comical form of *Othello*, *The Moor of Venice*, and then (perhaps partly because he was disheartened by a failure in it) turned from his Comedies to his Chronicle Pageant for several years and then wrote *As You Like It* in the quiet of Stratford. During these years he lost his only son Hamnet in 1596 and many hopes when he died, and bought a home in Stratford-on-Avon in 1597 and repaired it in 1598. It may be that after his son's death he was wiser and softened by sorrow and had found peace in resignation.

This Comedy is the third Forest-play but, unlike the two others, *Titus Andronicus* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it gives the name of the Forest. He changed the Ardennes of Lodge's *Rosalynde* to the Forest of Arden when he founded this Play on that delightful Romance.

Part of the story of *Rosalynde* was based on *The Tale of Gamelyn*, which has often been printed as Chaucer's since 1721 though it appears to be an older Romance which he had intended to use. In that Tale Sir John de Boundys divided



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his property among his three sons, and the youngest was maltreated and robbed by the eldest and took refuge with outlaws who made him their King. When he came on them they were feasting under the trees ;

Then Gamelyn under the Wood looked right,  
Seven score of young men he saw well adight,  
All set at meat in company about.

In Lodge's version Rosader found a banished King in the Forest : " It chanced that Gerismond, the lawful King of France, banished by Torismond, who with a lusty crew of outlaws lived in that Forest, that day in honour of his birth made a feast to all his bold yeomen, and frolicked it with store of wine and venison, sitting all at a long table under the shadow of lemon trees." These lemon trees indicate that he was thinking of a Southern Romance when he changed the old tale of adventure to a Pastoral Story. There were no women and no shepherds in it and the wicked eldest brother was hanged at the end of it ; but a Pastoral Story needed amorous ladies and impossible shepherds and a fortunate close.

It may be that when he set his story in France and named the old knight Sir John de Bordeaux, recalling *Sir Huon de Bordeaux*, he reminded his readers that these stories were French. And Shakespeare may have meant to do this when he called the old Knight Sir Rowland de Bois and his son Orlando, for he probably knew that these were the French and Italian forms of one name.

The English Pastoral convention established by Sidney's *Arcadia* was borrowed from France. The Latin *Bucolics* had a different falsity. The Greek goatherd's flock was as dear to him as his lost Amaryllis ; but Corydon neglected his task to wander under the beeches and Mopsus carved his song on their boles and Gallus sighed to emulate him,—

Certum est in silvis, inter spelæa ferarum,  
Malle pati tenerisque meos incidere amores  
Arboribus.

When Longus wrote *The Lesbian Pastorals of Daphnis and Chloe* in the Second Century or at the beginning of the



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alien to them. The next important Pastoral, the rambling Romance called *Arcadia*, was written about 1489 by Jacopo Sannazaro, a Neapolitan of Spanish descent who served a French King of Naples. The *Ameto* and the *Arcadia* were copied by two Portuguese Writers, Bernardim Ribeiro, who wrote *Menina e Moça* before 1523, and Jorge de Montemayor or Montemôr, who wrote his unfinished *Diana Enamorada* in Castilian about 1542 though it does not seem to have been printed before 1589. The *Arcadia* and the *Diana Enamorada* seem to have been the chief sources of Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. Apart from this derivation from Boccaccio's *Ameto* these were French in their mood, for all the earlier writers of Spain and Portugal were taught by their neighbours in the hills of Provence.

There were few flocks of sheep in Italy or Spain or Provence, and the peasants in those Countries were apt to tend goats on the hills or swine under the trees. The few shepherds there had to find pasture under the trees because the open country was parched. This was one of the reasons why the shepherds in Pastorals inhabited Forests, and besides, these provided adventures with wild beasts and with robbers. This Woodland nature of the Pastoral Stories helped to make them absurd in England where the shepherds were numerous and every one knew that they seldom danced in the Woods or wrote Sonnets or carved their loves on the trees.

The English Woodland Romances were the Robin Hood Ballads and Plays which were mainly concerned with feasting and fighting under the greenwood tree and were imitated in France in such Comedies as *Robin et Marion*. The men in the Pit found the Pastoral convention ridiculous. So did Shakespeare and he turned it to ridicule. *As You Like It* is an ironical Comedy. Instead of interpreting the tale by a setting as he did in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, he provided a wise man and a Fool to censure its folly.

Lodge's imitation of Lyly's *Euphues* and of Sidney's *Arcadia* retained the form invented in France, the alternate employment of Prose and Verse which is seen in *Aucassin et Nicolette* with the headings "Or dient et content et fabloient" and "Or se cante." This form seems to show that such

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Romances were told alternately by a man who recited and another who sang; but by his time Verse was only employed to decorate the story with "Sonnets" (which were amorous verses not bound by a particular form) or with Eclogues such as the one between Montanus and Corydon inserted in *Rosalynde*.

Lyly may have copied his *Euphues* from the traditional account of Euripides who was said to have been dissolute and to have ended his days in solitude in a cavern at Salamis. And Lodge may have seen his own character in the picture of Euphues (who had sinned in his Youth and had wandered and had retired to be calm) though he was still restless when he was writing this tale during a long voyage at Sea.

Lodge wrote in his Address to the Gentlemen Readers: "To be brief, gentlemen, room for a soldier and sailor that gives you the fruit of his labours that he wrote in the Ocean, where every line was wet in the surge and every humorous passion counterchecked with a storm. If you like it, so; and yet I will be yours in duty if you be mine in favour." He took the more pleasure in this dream of the Woods because he was far from land when he wrote. And Lope de Vega resembled him in this, if it is true that he wrote his Pastoral Novel *Arcadia* on board the *San Juan* with the Armada.

It may be that Shakespeare took delight too in *Rosalynde* because he was an exile from the Forest of Arden when it was published ten years after *Euphues and his England* and in the same year as Sidney's *Arcadia* and the first Books of *The Faery Queen*. In those days it was in the height of the fashion and he was young enough to appreciate its fanciful charm and merry enough to parody it; but in 1599 the fashion had faded with Queen Elizabeth's enjoyment of it, and he treated the story smilingly, retaining its charm while he was denying its truth with *Touchstone* and *Jaques*.

There are signs of haste or change in this Play, as when Celia is described by Le Beau as taller than Rosalind who claims the boy's part because she is "more than common tall," though Orlando (of whom Phebe admits that he is not very tall) says that she is just as high as his heart. This seems to show that Rosalind was meant to be short (probably to suit the Boy-player who represented her) and that her own state-



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ment of her height was from Lodge "I, thou seest, am of a tall stature and would very well become the person and apparel of a page." But Le Beau's statement is contradicted by Oliver :

The boy is fair,  
Of female favour, and bestows himself  
Like a ripe sister ; the woman low  
And browner than her brother.

Orlando's impossible failure to recognise Rosalind is also from Lodge,—“ Rosader, who took him flat for a shepherd's swain, made him this answer.” So is the Wicked Brother's repentance and his fortunate marriage. In Lodge's version Rosader knew Saladin but was not recognised till he said, “ Know Saladin that thou hast met with Rosader.” In Shakespeare's they knew one another but the repentance became more sudden and only caused by the rescue. In one point his tale is wilder than Lodge's, for the second Wicked Brother, Duke Frederick, is quickly reformed but King Torismond is defeated and killed. In the same way as Lodge had softened the *Tale of Gamelyn* by reforming and sparing Saladin, Shakespeare now softened *Rosalynde* by converting Duke Frederick, and the story became less credible in each of its stages.

These Midsummer Comedies might all have been named *All's Well that Ends Well* or *As You Like It* or *What You Will*. In this Play Jaques says, “ Come, more, another stanza—call you 'em stanza ? ” and Amiens replies, “ What you will, Monsieur Jaques.” Its name was probably suggested by Lodge's Preface to *Rosalynde*, “ if you like it, so,” and it gave a clue to the meaning and the mood of this Comedy.

There seems to be one notable misprint in this Play. When Jaques parodies “ Under the Greenwood Tree,” with its call, “ come hither, come hither, come hither,” in his reply,

If it do come to pass  
That any man turn Ass,

he is now made to sing,

Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame.

It has been alleged that these cryptic words are a Welsh or

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an Irish call, but it may be that they were the Latin for "come hither," "Huc veni" (as in Catullus,

Huc veni niveo gerens  
Luteum pede soccum),

pronounced in the old way, and that when he was asked, "What's that Ducdame?" he answered, "'Tis a Greek invocation to call fools into a circle," because the question had shown that it was Greek to the illiterate Amiens. If so, it may also have been Greek to the Printer who decided to put "Ducdame" instead.

The name Jaques was borne by Englishmen then, for instance by Captain Jaques, who fought under Sir William Stanley in Flanders, but it is a French name here, like Amiens and Le Beau, and a sign that all the outlaws are French. This is shown too when we are told in the first Scene that the banished Duke is "in the Forest of Arden and a many merry men with him, and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England," and that Orlando is "the stubbornest young fellow of France."

This Forest of Arden is never said to be English. Still, when in the fifth Act a Rustic named William, who is aged five and twenty and is content with his wit and wisdom and wealth, thanks God that he was born in a Forest, Shakespeare may have been thinking of himself and his home. This may have been a sign that this Play was first written when he was aged about five and twenty. Though it is now mature and serene the changes or contradictions in it may show that there was an earlier form. He was aged about twenty-six in 1590, the year in which *Rosalynde* and *Arcadia* were printed, and he may have parodied a prevalent fashion then as he did in *Love's Labour's Lost*, instead of returning to it nine years or so after it was ruling at Court. This would be probable if we could be sure that he drew Lodge as Jaques and George Whetstone as Touchstone.

Thomas Lodge, who was a son of a Lord Mayor of London, was born about 1558 and after education at Oxford and Lincoln's Inn abandoned the Law for Literature. He seems to have led a dissolute life when he was young, and he was given to travel: he sailed to the Canaries with Clarke in

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1588 and to Brazil with Cavendish in 1591 and visited France several times. Early in 1589 he published *Scilla's Metamorphoses*, Enterlaced with the unfortunate Love of Glaucus, afterwards called *Glaucus and Scilla*, which seems to have been imitated by Shakespeare in *Venus and Adonis*. And he seems to have renounced work for the Stage then, for he vowed in it,

To write no more of that whence shame doth grow,  
Or tie my pen to penny-knaves delight,  
But live with fame and so for fame to write.

In the next year he published *Rosalynde : Euphues' Golden Legacy found in his cell at Silexdra*. About 1596 he changed his Religion (becoming a Catholic) and his manner of life and married and left London for Essex. After this he became a physician, but devoted his leisure to translating Josephus and Seneca. He was named in the Recusant List of 1604 and seems to have been in trouble for the Gunpowder Plot, which was planned at White Webbs in Essex, for he fled to France in 1605 and did not obtain leave to return till 1610. And he died about nine years after Shakespeare.

Lodge's Romances and his Poems were melancholy : *Rosalynde*, for instance, is full of mournful reflections. If Shakespeare drew him as Jaques, who had been a libertine and a wanderer, he may have added some touches after Lodge had become a Convertite in 1596. It may have amused him to make Lodge (who had written *Diogenes his Singularities*) a cynical critic of Euphuism's dainty devices. And the fact that Lodge was in his Youth a close friend of Robert Greene's and had written a *Looking-glass for London and England* with him about 1587 might have suggested another reason for this.

We do not know when George Whetstone was born, though we can guess that this was about 1544, nor when he died, for there is no trace of him after 1587 when he published a version of the Babington Plot. Like Lodge, he provided Shakespeare with the base of a Play, for *Measure for Measure* was partly founded on his *Promos and Cassandra*, printed in 1578. If, like Greene, he resented this liberty, Shakespeare may have drawn him with Lodge as Touchstone of whom

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Celia says in the first Act that Fortune "hath sent this natural for our whetstone, for always the dullness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits." It so happened that Whetstone had published *The Touchstone for the Times* in 1584. The clownish Fool's part in this Comedy was to act as a whetstone for wit and a touchstone for the pleasant illusions.

If we could be certain that these two men (who were probably hostile to Shakespeare) had been drawn in this Play, this would suggest that there had been an earlier version, partly because Lodge had renounced work for the Stage in 1589 and London in 1596, and we have no record of Whetstone after 1587, and partly because Jaques and Touchstone, as we have them, are Characters too admirable to be caricatures. Shakespeare may have sketched Jaques and Touchstone and many other Characters from men of his time, for we have evidence that he was supposed to copy his Characters from living men often; but if he did, he transformed them by putting his own nature in them. Even if there remained a resemblance to Essex or Southampton in Hamlet or to Burghley in Polonius or to Ben Jonson in Falstaff or to Marston in Pistol or to Lodge in Jaques, all these had become children of Shakespeare. And Jaques seems to speak with Shakespeare's own voice.

Shakespeare does not seem to have taken the part of Jaques, if we can trust the legend that he was seen as Old Adam (whose name he borrowed from Lodge, who took it from *Gamelyn*), for these come on the Stage together. But that legend may deal with a later time. If we could be certain that he chose such a part as Old Adam in 1599 we could infer that he was tired of the Stage.

Whether Touchstone was drawn from Whetstone or merely christened with intent to annoy him, he now belongs to the group of wise Fools with Feste in *Twelfth Night* and Lavache in *All's Well that Ends Well* and the nameless Fool in *King Lear*. All these are Court-jesters. They were not copied from the Vice in the Morals or any other jesters in the Morality or Miracle Plays. They may have been suggested by Greene's Ralph Simnel (the King's Fool in *Friar Bacon*), or Nashe's *Will Summer*, but if so, they were derived from Court-fools. Nashe's Will Summer probably



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took more than his name from King Henry the Eighth's favourite Jester.

George Cavendish told in his *Life of Cardinal Wolsey* how when the fallen Cardinal parted from Norris on Putney Heath he sent his Fool to the King, perhaps because he wished to retain one faithful friend at the Court: "'I am sorry,' quoth he, 'that I have no condign token to send to the King. But if ye would, at this my request, present the King with this poor Fool, I trust his Highness would accept him well, for surely for a nobleman's pleasure he is worth a thousand Pounds.' So Master Norris took the Fool with him, with whom my Lord was fain to send six of tall yeomen to conduct and convey the Fool to the Court, for the poor Fool took on and fired so in such rage when he saw that he must needs depart from my Lord. Yet notwithstanding, they conveyed him with Master Norris to the Court where the King received him most gladly." This poor Fool, Master Williams otherwise Patch, who raged and wept when he was dragged from the master whom the wise had forsaken, may have been the chief model of the Fool in *King Lear*.

I think that Lavache in *All's Well that Ends Well* was the first of Shakespeare's Court-jesters because he is the worst, and he may have been copied from Greene's Ralph Simnel. Feste, the malicious Fool in *Twelfth Night*, seems an improved version of him and may have been partly drawn from Queen Elizabeth's Fool, Pace, of whom Bacon recorded in his *Apophthegms* how "Pace, the bitter Fool, was not suffered to come at Queen Elizabeth because of his bitter humour," and how when she relented and said to him, "Come on, Pace, now we shall hear our faults," Pace replied, "I do not use to talk of that all the town talks of." But the loving Fool in *King Lear*, who pines away when he loses Cordelia, and the kindly Fool Touchstone, who rivals him in fidelity, have little in common with them except their wit and their singing. These two, I think, were drawn at a time when Shakespeare had learnt to value love more than laughter.

Donald Lupton wrote of the Players in his *London and the Country Carbonadoed*, "they practice a wise order, for most commonly the wisest man is the Fool." This was Touch-

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stone's view when he said, "I do now remember a saying, 'the Fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man doth know himself to be a fool,' " and it may have been Shakespeare's when he was wise enough to know his own folly.

Sir Walter Raleigh writes of this Comedy: "A minute examination of this Play has given a curious result. No single bird, or insect, or flower, is mentioned by name. The words 'flower' and 'leaf' do not occur. The trees of the Forest are the oak, the hawthorn, the palm-tree and the olive. For animals, there are the deer, one lioness, and one green and gilded snake. The season is not easy to determine; perhaps it is Summer; we hear only of the biting cold and the wintry wind." These things are natural in a tapestry-picture, like the Narrative Poems, and it may be that this fanciful atmosphere is one of the signs that Shakespeare had written a form of this Play when he wrote *Venus and Adonis* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; but, if he did, he transformed it when he was able to draw robust English girls and boys and his two wisest Jesters, Touchstone and Jaques. The first scene may have been meant to be French, like the scene of *Love's Labour's Lost*, but all the Characters of the Play are now English though the Forest of Arden is in the Country of Dreams.

*The Taming of the Shrew*, which was printed next in the Folio of 1623, is a boisterous farce. It does not seem to have been printed before 1623. Its place in the Folio suggests that it was revised after *As You Like It* was written. If that Play was written at Stratford during the Summer of 1599, this one may have been hastily revised at that time for a performance by his Company there. This was a farce fit to amuse the Rustics of Stratford, and the local allusions which were added to it would have been welcome to them though lost on the Londoners. Mr. Saintsbury suggests in *The Cambridge History of Literature* that it was written at Stratford for a local performance.

Coleridge in his *Classification* of 1802 put the old *Taming of The Shrew* and the old *King John* as transition works (Uebergangswerke) at the beginning and couples the present form of this Play with *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as

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“worked-up afresh (umgearbeitet)” between the later *King John* and *Measure for Measure*. I think that this guess was nearly right though I suspect that there was a still older form which Shakespeare adapted.

The oldest form survives in the jingling verses, for instance,

And as he stooped again to take it up,  
This mad-brained bridegroom took him such a cuff,  
That down fell priest and book and book and priest,  
“Now take them up,” quoth he, “if any list.”

The second form is in the early Blank Verse :

You wrong me, Signor Gremio ; give me leave,  
I am a gentleman of Verona, Sir.

The last form is seen in some of the Prose, for instance, Biondello’s speech in the third Act beginning “Why, Petruccio is coming in a new hat and old jerkin” and in the Induction.

In the same way as the setting of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* explained that Fairy-tale to the Court the Induction brought the people of Stratford into touch with this farce. Christopher Sly had Bottom’s brief illusion of greatness. The Rustics who saw this farce, which had been written for a different audience, were in Christopher’s place. The Players were brought in, as they were in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and in *Hamlet*, to act a Play within a Play, as they did in all their performances since all the spectators were acting the Tragical Comedies of their private affairs.

We can trace Christopher Sly’s deception to *The Sleeper Awakened* in *The Arabian Nights’ Entertainments* which relates how the Caliph Haroun Al-Raschid deceived Abou Hassan. The many authors who imitated this trick (for instance, Calderon in *La Vida es Sueno*) were repeating a tale told in forgotten days in the East. When Duke Philip of Burgundy played this trick about 1440 (according to Luis Vivez), he was acting a farce already long familiar in Spain through the old stories imported by the Moors of Granada.

Shakespeare may have found his Induction in *The Taming of A Shrew*, which was printed in 1594, 1596 and 1607.

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That old farce may have been the foundation of this one as the *Troublesome Reign of King John* was of *King John* or it may have been a separate version of an earlier Play. For instance, the lines in the last Act of *The Taming of The Shrew*,

Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,  
And place your hands below your husband's foot :  
In token of which duty, if he please,  
My hand is ready, may it do him ease,

do not seem later than the similar ones in *The Taming of A Shrew*,

Obeys them, love them, keep and nourish them,  
If they by any means do want our helps,  
Laying our hands under their feet to tread.

There are two tales in this farce. The one about Bianca's three lovers was borrowed from George Gascoigne's *Supposes*, and the other, the story of the taming, is traced to the Moors of Granada and through them to the East. When Don Juan Manuel, who died in 1347, wrote *El Conde Lucanor* he took most of "the fifty pleasant tales of Patronio" from the neighbouring Moors. His tale of "What happened to a Young Man on his Wedding-day" related that there were two Moors who were friends and that one of them had a promising son and the other had a termagant daughter. In it the son insisted on marrying the termagant because she was rich though his father and hers tried to dissuade him, and he subdued her on the wedding-day by feigning ferocity, killing a dog and a cat and a horse for disobeying his orders. This was repeated in the *Notti Piacevoli di Straparola* and in the *Novelliero Italiano* and in *La Collection de Legrande D'Aussy* and elsewhere. It was probably invented in Persia, like most of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, for the humour of such Sanskrit collections as the *Ocean of Tales* (Kathasaritsagara) is milder and is more lenient to women.

Shakespeare may have thought it Italian though when he set it in Padua he followed the fashion of that time, as he did when he linked *The Tempest* with Milan and two



## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

Plays with Verona and two with Venice. By using the familiar device of the Induction he transported the story to England and labelled it as one fit to amuse Christopher Sly.

This Play has often been coupled with *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (for instance by Coleridge and Mr. Dowden) and it may be that both were revised about the same time to please the townsmen of Stratford. This would agree with the view that *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, as we have it, was written about 1599, and it would help to explain the possible statement in Kemp's *Nine Days' Wonder* that the merry host of the Inn was drawn from John Shakespeare. It may be that in these Plays Shakespeare drew his neighbours at home comically in the same way as he used names which are to be found in the Recusant Lists of Warwickshire, such as Page, Bardolph, Bates, Bolt and Fluellen, for his Comical Characters.

The date of *All's Well that Ends Well*, the Comedy printed after *The Taming of The Shrew* in the Folio of 1623, is obscured by revisions. This Play does not seem to have been printed before the Folio of 1623. Coleridge in his *Classification* of 1819 put it among the earliest Plays, but he probably meant this to be subject to his note in his *Classification* of 1802, where he ranked it as the first of the Second Epoch "afterwards worked-up afresh (umgearbeitet) especially Parolles."

Sir Israel Gollancz, who inclines to take it to be *Love's Labour's Won* (as Coleridge did), writes, "The Play was probably originally a companion Play to *Love's Labour's Lost* and was written about the years 1590-1592." I think that the second form of this Play was written before the revision of *Twelfth Night* and suggested it. Three versions are visible,—an Italianate Comedy and a skilful revision in the mood of *Twelfth Night* and a Tragi-comedy written with a darker intention. The second form is to be seen, for instance, when the Countess debates with her Clown or Jester, Lavache. It is the principal one, for the Tragi-comical version, which was written when Shakespeare had begun to be elderly, was never completed and so the Play was left a Comedy spoilt.

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Parolles is impossible because he is drawn in contradictory moods. The Parolles of the first Act could never have been fooled in the fourth. And the Helena who converses with him in the beginning could never have chosen to tell her grief in a Sonnet. Some of the Editors have seen fit to reject that talk of virginity because they consider it a blot on the Play; but I think that it survives from the first form in the manner of the second revision. So does the Countess's advice to her son which is expanded by Polonius in *Hamlet*,—

Love all, trust a few,  
Do wrong to none; be able for thine enemy  
Rather in power than use; and keep thy friend  
Under thy own life's key.

This was a conventional opening and it had been used in *Rosalynde* when the dying Knight says, "Therefore, my sons, choose a friend as the Hyperborei do the metals, sever them from the ore with fire and let them not bide the stamp before they be current: so try them and then trust." In this Play the advice is wasted on Bertram as is Helena's love. He survives from the days when Shakespeare could admire such a boy. In the first form he was meant to be admirable and Helena's love was the same as the lady's in *A Lover's Complaint*. The last Helena could never have loved him or forced herself upon him or stooped to the stale trick which Mariana employed in *Measure for Measure*: her wisdom and nobility clash with a tale fit to amuse the merry ladies of Florence.

I think that *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will*, the Comedy printed next in the Folio of 1623, sprang from this Play. We do not know when it was written, and we have no earlier edition of it.

The Twelfth Night after Christmas, which was the Feast of the Epiphany, January the sixth, had been associated with Plays since *El Misterio de Los Reyes Majos* had been written for it about the Twelfth Century. It marked the close of the rejoicings at Christmas. Shakespeare's Company acted at Greenwich at Christmas in 1594, 1595, 1596, 1598

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and 1599 and at Whitehall in 1597 and at Richmond (which the Queen called "a Winter box for her Age") in 1600. In some of these years, for instance, in 1597 and 1600 (and perhaps in all, except in 1594) they acted on Twelfth Night. Sir Sidney Lee says that this Play was designed for the Twelfth Night of 1599-1600 and adds "the alternative title, *What You Will*, repeats the easy levity of *As You Like It*." While this casual name may show that this Play was first seen on Twelfth Night at Court, it may have also meant that there was a tone of Christmas jollity in it instead of a mocking Carnival mood.

John Manningham's Diary proves that a form of this Play was seen at the Middle Temple in February, 1601-1602 : he wrote, "At our feast we had a Play called *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will*. Much like the *Comedy of Errors* or *Menechmi* in Plautus, and most like and near to that in Italian called *Inganni*. A good practise in it to make the steward believe his lady-widow was in love with him by counterfeiting a letter as from his lady, in general terms, telling him what she liked best in him and prescribing his gesture in smiling, his apparel, etc., and then when he came to practise, making him believe they took him to be mad."

One change is indicated in this, for Olivia is not described as a widow in the Play as we have it. This change was probably made to leave her masterful courting of Viola and Sebastian more seemly by reducing her age. While she was a widow this Play was still nearer to *All's Well that Ends Well*, a development of the Scene in that Comedy (the third in the first Act), where the Countess of Rousillon consults with her steward. Malvolio may have been made by combining the solemn steward with the fantastic Parolles who, when he was fooled, confessed himself to Morgan whom he supposed to be a Friar.

I think that a first form of this Play closely linked with *The Comedy of Errors* was written after the first version of *All's Well that Ends Well*. I infer this from the fact that the story of the deception is heartless. Shakespeare could not have chosen a noble gentleman's heartbreak as the theme of a jest after he had drawn Jaques. The noble strain in Malvolio may have been added in the riper days when he



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changed the Comical Shylock to a suffering man shamefully used. Malvolio, who began as a laughing-stock, a fool and a hypocrite, was changed, I think, to a gentleman blinded by Love and nearly driven to madness by a conspiracy of drunkards and fools. In the first form drunkenness and madness were Comical. In the last form Malvolio is pitied, and though Sir Toby Belch keeps his name (and justifies it when he says, "a plague o' these pickle herrings") he is amiably fuddled and destined to be reformed by Maria. Some students complain that a man of his rank should not have married a servant, but in doing this they forget that she was a gentlewoman.

Malvolio's dream was a version of *The Sleeper Awakened*. His misfortune was nearer to Abou Hassan's than Sly's or Bottom's had been, for he shared his imprisonment in chains as a madman. But in the last form of the Play he was more akin to Don Quixote than to any of them.

It may be that after Shakespeare had written the second revision of *All's Well that Ends Well* he altered *Much Ado About Nothing*, which was printed in a Quarto edition in 1600, and then turned to *Twelfth Night*. The two themes in this Play, the Error's Tale and the deception, may have been written first as separate Interludes, but they are now linked with such skill that the customary Errors become only a setting for Malvolio's mistake. The theme of the Interlude of the Errors was old. He may have found it in the Italian Comedies called *Gli Inganni* and *Gli Ingannati*, which were partly derived from Ariosto's *Suppositi*; but there was no need of a particular model for this hackneyed device. The Interlude of Malvolio's deception must have seemed probable to people who when they heard him reflect, "there is example for it: the lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe," remembered how the Tudors had risen because King Henry the Sixth's widow had married Owen Tudor, a yeoman of her wardrobe, and how the second Duchess of Suffolk of King Henry the Eighth's time and the next Duchess of Suffolk had married men of similar rank (Richard Bertie and Adrian Stokes), and how the widow of the eighth Earl of Northumberland married her steward, Francis Fitton, in 1588. And Olivia's wooing of Viola,



## THE WINTER'S TALE

whose rank was nothing to her and seemed to her lower than Malvolio's, explained why he considered her encouragement possible.

This Play is linked, for instance, with *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* by the shipwreck and its part in the story, and with *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice* by the tone of the love-making and with *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Much Ado About Nothing* by smartness and a juvenile gaiety. If Shakespeare wrote it first at this time he was ringing the changes on the old happy themes before he abandoned them.

This Play is a triumph of Stage-craft. When it is seen on the Stage all its elements chime together like the notes of a song. This sets it apart from the other Midsummer Comedies except the last version of *Much Ado About Nothing*, which was probably written about the same time. It may be that he wrote two other Comedies, Falstaff's in *King Henry the Fourth* and the fourth Act of *The Winter's Tale*, and changed the first form of *The Tempest* from a fantastic Romance of Magic founded on *Pericles* to a Fairy-tale Comedy linked with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and combined two juvenile Plays in a satirical version of *Troilus and Cressida* about this time before he turned to his Tragedies.

*The Winter's Tale* is put next to *Twelfth Night* in the First Folio, but this would have been done if Heminge and Condell had looked on it as the last of the Comedies, whether it had been revised in these days or at the end of his work. Only the fourth Act is a Comedy. Though it resembles *As You Like It* in many ways it differs from it in lacking the ironical mood, which may have been due to the fact that *As You Like It* began as a parody, like *Love's Labour's Lost*, though it also prevails in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This Comedy is a delighted glimpse of Rustical England, in spite of the fact that it is set in Greene's Country, "Bohemia." It may have been written at Stratford when Shakespeare had begun to enjoy his home in the fields though he was still fettered to the trade of the Stage.

A second form of *The Tempest* may have been written there too in a domestic serenity, and retouched in 1603 as a

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farewell to his trade. *Troilus* and *Cressida* may have been rewritten in London in the War of the Poets. But the metrical tests are enough to prove that these Plays were all revised later, and Falstaff's Comedy shines in the dark Chronicle Pageant ; so *Twelfth Night*, as we have it, is the last of the Comedies. The sympathy due now to Malvolio helps to explain why it was the last. In the same way as Falstaff's laughter announced the end of the false Chronicle Pageant, the pity shown now for Shylock and Malvolio proved that the time for jesting was over.

In *Twelfth Night* the insistence that all this is a Midsummer Dream haunts the merry fooling again. Sebastian says,

What relish is in this ? how runs the stream ?  
Or I am mad or else this is a dream :  
Let Fancy still my sense in Lethe steep,  
If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep.

Fabian says, " here is more matter for a May morning." And the singing Clown, Feste, ends these happy dreams with his song :

When that I was and a little tiny boy,  
With hey ho ! the wind and the rain !  
A foolish thing was but a toy,  
For the rain it raineth every day.

## THE CHRONICLE PAGEANT

SAMUEL JOHNSON wrote in his *General Observations on Shakespeare's Plays*: "Shakespeare seems to have designed that the whole series of actions from the beginning of *Richard the Second* to the end of *Henry the Fifth* should be considered by the reader as one work, upon one plan, only broken into parts by the necessity of exhibition." It may be that Shakespeare had no thought of a reader while he furnished these Plays; but his intention to unite them is evident, and this is a justification of the Folio Order. He may have written them as separate Scenes and united them later according to the different Reigns. The Plays from *King Richard the Second* to *King Henry the Sixth* are a Pageant of the Contest between the Houses of York and Lancaster called the Wars of the Roses. The two other Histories, the *Life and Death of King John* and the *Famous History of King Henry the Eighth*, may have been planned as part of another Pageant of the Contest between the Crown and the Church. Though they are apart they are linked with all the others as Scenes of a Chronicle Pageant of the Annals of England.

Every Scene in this Pageant, except the second part of *King Richard the Second* and a lost form of *King Henry the Eighth*, was openly founded on older Plays such as *The Troublesome Reign of King John* and *The Famous Victories of King Henry the Fifth* and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York and the Death of Good King Henry the Sixth*, which were probably made from the stock of the Traditional Stage by Robert Greene and Thomas Kyd and George Peele and others under the influence of Christopher Marlowe or with his help. And the second part of *King Richard the Second* was an open imitation of Marlowe's *Edward the Second*, which was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1593 and printed in 1594.

We know little about Christopher Marlowe except that

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he was a shoemaker's son and was born in Canterbury in 1564, a couple of months before Shakespeare's birth, and was educated at a Grammar-School there and at Benet College at Cambridge (now called Corpus Christi) and wrote some Poems and Plays and perished in 1593. He seems to have left Cambridge in 1583, and at some time between 1585 and 1588 he won sudden renown with his magnificent Poem, *Tamburlaine*.

Swinburne wrote of him: "He first, and he alone, guided Shakespeare into the right way of work. His music, in which there is no echo of any man's before, found an echo in the more prolonged, but hardly more exalted, harmony of Milton. He was the greatest, the most daring and inspired pioneer in all our Poetic Literature."

The dates of all Marlowe's Works are uncertain. He may have begun with his translations from Ovid's *Amores* and from Lucan's *Pharsalia* and the first form of *Dido Queen of Carthage* at Cambridge, and may have written the two Parts of *Tamburlaine* next and *The Massacre at Paris* with Kyd and then the beginning of *The Jew of Malta* and then *Edward the Second* and then the two first Sestiads of *Hero and Leander* and then part of the *Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*. It is probable that he took some share in writing *Lust's Dominion or the Lascivious Queen*, which was printed as his in 1657, and *The Troublesome Reign of King John* and other Chronicle Histories; but if so this was hack-work and only written for bread. And he may have helped others to write a version of *Pericles*. Only *Tamburlaine* and *Edward the Second* have survived as he wrote them: only the first Act and the first Scene of the second Act of *The Jew of Malta* are his, and *Doctor Faustus* was degraded by others.

In his part of *The Jew of Malta* Barabas stands as a conqueror, like Faustus and Tamburlaine. He is a Merchant-King, sending his Argosies to ransack the World for him, and he is a noble Jew, scorning the Christians. He says of them,

I can see no fruits in all their faith  
But malice, falsehood, and excessive pride;

when he is robbed by them he says,



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The man that dealeth righteously shall live ;  
And which of you can charge me otherwise ?

and in the first Scene of the second Act he is shown praying for help,

Oh Thou that with a fiery pillar led'st  
The Sons of Israel through the dismal shades,  
Light Abraham's offspring, and direct the hand  
Of Abigail this night.

Then Marlowe cast the beginning of this Tragical Poem aside and allowed others to tack a childish Melodrama to it when he saw that no Company would dare to perform it, or he finished it and others destroyed the rest of it and added the part adapted to the popular taste. In the third Scene of the second Act another Barabas, the villainous Jew of the Traditional Stage, proclaims his enormity,

As for myself, I walk abroad o' nights,  
And kill sick people groaning under walls ;  
Sometimes I go about and poison wells.

We know that *Doctor Faustus* was maimed. Philip Henslowe, after recording in his Diary that it had been acted in 1594, wrote, "paid unto Thomas Dekker, the 20th December, 1597, for additions to *Faustus* 20 shillings, and five shillings for a Prologue to *Tamburlaine*," and recorded a loan "unto the Company, the 22nd of November, 1602, to pay unto William Birde and Samuel Rowley for their additions to *Doctor Faustus*." We can infer that all these additions were in the Play when it was printed in 1604. Marlowe may have left it unfinished when he was killed, or his form of it may have been degraded to gratify the taste of the Pit. I think that his version was a Tragical Poem, and that all the Comical Scenes and the Prose were added to it, mainly by Dekker whose rhythm is seen, for instance, when Faustus says, "Though my heart pants and quivers to remember that I have been a Student here these thirty years, Oh ! would that I had never seen Wirtemberg, never read book."

When the second edition of *Tamburlaine* was printed in

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1592 it had an Address to the Reader which said, "I have purposely omitted and left out certain fond and frivolous gestures, disguising and in my opinion far unmeet for the matter, which I thought might prove more tedious unto the wise than any way else to be regarded, though haply they have been of some vain conceited fondlings greatly gaped at, what time they were showed upon the Stage in their graced deformities : nevertheless now to be mixtured in print with such matters of worth, it would prove a great disaster to so honourable and stately a history." This statement agrees with the first lines of the Prologue,

From jiggling veins of rhyming mother wits,  
And such conceits as Clownage keeps in pay,  
We'll lead you to the stately tent of War,

and it is a proof that *Tamburlaine* was degraded with Clownage when it was first seen.

Marlowe seems to have founded *Tamburlaine the Great* on two Spanish Books, *Vida y Hazañas Del Gran Tamerlan*, printed in 1582 (an account of a journey made in the East between 1403 and 1406 by Ruy Gonzales de Clavigo) and Pedro Mexia's *Life of Timur* printed in 1543. And he may have founded *The Jew of Malta* on a Spanish Romance, as Mr. Addington Symonds suggested. His Barabas appears to be a proud Spanish Jew, one of the many exiles from Spain, and leaves the Stage saying,

Hermoso placer de los dineros.

The Spanish nature of *Tamburlaine* (which Robert Greene recognized when he mocked that proud Poem in his *Comical History of Alphonsus King of Arragon*) is seen in the beginning, but the Spanish pride vanishes and only the Spanish cruelty of the story is left. Marlowe's heart went to the Spaniards because they were a Nation of conquerors, and his Poetry thrilled with the dignity and splendour of Spain. He lived in days when the English began to rival the Spaniards : the men in the Pit appreciated the greatness of *Tamburlaine* because they were conscious that their Country was great ; they rejoiced in heroic tales of old Wars and

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exulted with King Henry the Fifth because they were conquerors.

Mr. Tucker Brooke says in his *Tudor Drama*: "*Tamburlaine* is, more than any other Drama, the source and original of the English History Plays." But he also says that the English Heroic Plays were coeval with the Religious Stage. Marlowe transmuted the immemorial Chronicle Plays, and he was the first to write English Tragedies as passionate Poems.

Marlowe himself is obscured like his Barabas and Faustus. There is no portrait or description of him, and we only know that he was called Haughty Tamerlane and Kind Kit. An enemy's insult and the accident of death in a brawl have left him defamed.

Robert Greene, who had already attacked him in his *Perimedes*, printed in 1588, saying that two Gentlemen-Poets had his Poetry in derision, "for that I could not make my verses jet upon the Stage in Tragical buskins, every word filling the mouth like the faburden of Bowbell, daring God out of Heaven, with that Atheist, Tamburlaine," wrote on his death-bed in *A Groat'sworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*: "Wonder not (for with thee will I first begin) thou famous gracer of tragedians, that Greene, who hath said with thee, like the fool in his heart, 'there is no God,' should now give glory unto His greatness. Why should thy excellent wit, His gift, be so blinded that thou should'st give no glory to the giver? . . . Defer not (with me) till the last point of extremity, for little knowest thou how in the end thou shalt be visited."

If Marlowe had been convicted of Atheism he would have been burnt at the Stake, like Francis Kett, who may have taught him at Cambridge (for he was a Fellow of Benet) and was executed in 1589 for interpreting the Bible heretically. This public accusation was printed in 1592, and on the eighteenth of May, 1593, the Privy Council issued a warrant for his arrest. He was killed on the first of June in that year, but his friend Thomas Kyd was arrested on a suspicion of Atheism and is said to have been tortured to extract an avowal. We know nothing more of Kyd except that he died in poverty in 1595. Neither do we know how Marlowe was killed.

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One version says that he was stabbed on the deck of the *Golden Hind*, which was moored then near Deptford as a show and a drinking-booth, as it was when Paul Hentzner wrote in 1598, "before taking the air down the River, the first thing that struck us was the ship of that noble Pirate, Sir Francis Drake," and when Ben Jonson wrote in *Every Man in His Humour*, "Drake's old ship at Deptford may sooner circle the World again." Another account says that he was killed in a fight in the dark in the little village of Deptford. Francis Meres wrote in *Palladis Tamia*: "As the Poet Lycophron was shot to death by a certain rival of his, so Christopher Marlowe was stabbed to death by a bawdy serving-man, a rival in his lewd love." Somewhere in that riverside village and in some obscure fray a fugitive from Justice had perished, and though he was mourned by some friends (as by Edward Blunt, for instance, who wrote of him when he dedicated *Hero and Leander* to Thomas Walsingham in 1598, "the impression of the man that hath been dear to us living an after life in our memory") no one knew England's irreparable loss when he died.

Marlowe may have been only guilty of doubt. According to the Harleian Manuscripts, a few days before he died an informer, Richard Bame or Baine, charged him with saying that "if there is any God or good Religion it is in the Papists, and that all Protestants are Hypocritical Asses." The drift of his share of *Faustus* is profoundly religious. This I take to be his last Play, and this, I think, was why some one added to it,

Terminat hora diem, terminat auctor opus.

This play and *Edward the Second* lack the young glory of *Tamburlaine*, the pride of the song and the intoxicating joy of the singer; his voice is older in them, but it is still noble and great. If (as most students have thought) *Edward the Second* was written just before he was killed, its severe concentration is not compatible with a riotous life.

The fact that the two Thomas Walsinghams of Scadbury at Chislehurst (cousins of the more famous Sir Francis) were his intimate friends and often his hosts in his last days, as when the warrant was issued, is enough to throw doubt



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on the legend that he fell in a drunken brawl. Even according to Greene he was a Gentleman-Poet, though (apart from his character) his claim to that rank depended on his education at Cambridge.

The issue of the warrant against him seems to have been a part of an attempt to destroy Sir Walter Raleigh, who was accused of Atheism too, but succeeded in defending himself. This would explain why the Queen's Ministers took the trouble to persecute two writers of Plays who cannot have been of any importance in the eyes of the State though they were the two men who taught Shakespeare how to write Tragedies. Marlowe may have been killed while he was resisting an attempt to arrest him. The man who killed him alleged that he had been attacked without cause and that Marlowe's brain had been pierced by his own dagger, and the acceptance of this improbable story may be a sign that it was advisable to cover the truth.

Marlowe died before he was thirty,

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,  
And burned is Apollo's laurel bough,

and even to these last verses of *Faustus* somebody added a ridiculous close,

That sometime grew within this learned man.

Faustus is gone: regard his hellish fall

Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise.

Mr. Havelock Ellis says of *Edward the Second* in his *Christopher Marlowe*, printed in the Mermaid Series, "it was not till ten years later that Shakespeare came near to this severe reticence, these deep and solemn tones." During those ten years between 1593 and 1603 Shakespeare, who (though he was of about the same age) was only a beginner when Marlowe was supreme as a dramatist, learnt from him how to fashion his Tragedies through the long pupilage of his Chronicle Pageant.

When in *Edward the Second* the King said to the Abbot,

Father, this life contemplative is Heaven:

Oh! that I might this life in quiet lead!

But we, alas, are chased,

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he spoke in the mood of Shakespeare's sorrowful Kings. And Shakespeare's explanatory villains resembled Mortimer in *Edward the Second* and Guise, who said in the *Massacre at Paris*,

Now Guise begin thy deep-engendered thoughts,  
and Gloster, who said in the *True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*,

I will go clad my body in gay ornaments,  
And lull myself within a lady's lap,  
And witch sweet ladies with my words and looks.  
Oh monstrous man to harbour such a thought!  
Why Love did scorn me in my mother's womb. . . .  
Tut! I can smile and murder when I smile.

The confessions of wickedness must have survived from the Traditional Stage, for a child writing a Play would make a villain proclaim his iniquity as Aaron the Moor did in *Titus Andronicus*,

Oh how this villainy  
Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it!  
Let fools do good, and fair men call for Grace,  
Aaron will have his soul black like his face,

or as Barabas did in the Scenes added to Marlowe's share of *The Jew of Malta*. But Marlowe employed them with a Tragical dignity which Shakespeare repeated in *King Lear* and *Othello*. And Shakespeare's sorrowful Kings were imitated from Marlowe's *Edward the Second*, for though he wrote a form of *King Henry the Sixth* before that Play was written, he added the melancholy meditations to it after 1595.

Shakespeare drew his knowledge of History from the Chronicle Plays and from popular legends and from such Chronicles as came to his hand. It may be that he thought most of the legends, as the Prince does in *King Richard the Third* when he asks whether the Tower of London was built by Julius Cæsar and says,

Is it upon record? or else reported  
Successively from Age to Age he built it?

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and replies to Buckingham's answer,

But say, my lord, it 'was not registered,  
Methinks the truth should live from Age to Age  
As 'twere retailed to all posterity,  
Even to the general all-ending day.

The natural result was that his picture of the events of the Past was wildly inaccurate; but this was nothing to him for his chief aim was to please the men in the Pit. He had to agree with their inherited notions and to introduce fighting and din to split the ears of the groundlings, who (as Hamlet says) were, for the most part, capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise. If he had laboured to polish beautiful verses he would have wasted his time and would have damaged the success of his Pageant by separating it from his hearers. He had to write scores of passages of deliberate fustian, long recitations whose only merit was eloquence, because these were the main stuff of the Traditional Pageants; and his Kings and Queens and great Lords had to talk and behave in the old impossible way.

Only two of these History Plays, *King Henry the Fourth* and *King Henry the Fifth*, are mentioned as performed at the Court in Queen Elizabeth's time, and this may have meant only that Episodes from them were exhibited. And we have no evidence that any of them were provided for the students of Law. The Queen knew too much about Kings to take any delight in these conventional Monarchs, and the young students were supposed to have learnt a little knowledge of History. When Thomas Heywood edited the barbarous Play founded on a fragment of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* in 1633 he printed a Prologue and Epilogue "spoken at Court" and others "to the Stage at the Cock Pit." The Prologues and Epilogues of this Pageant are all addressed to the Pit.

Shakespeare found his own Tragical voice while he was writing this Pageant from time to time during the years of 1593 to 1603, when Plays of this nature were required by his Company, and so his Tragedies sprang directly from a national root. I think that he set little value on these Chronicle Plays, for they have few signs of revision after 1603.

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He may have looked on them as apart from all the rest of his work, for indeed they are not properly his, except the last Acts of *King Richard the Second* and the Comical Interlude of Falstaff's adventures in *King Henry the Fourth*. Shakespeare gave life to many of the Traditional puppets and sometimes ennobled the old stories, but Marlowe showed him the way.

According to Henslowe's Diary, Lord Strange's Men acted a new Play called *Henry the Sixth* at the Rose Theatre on the third of March, 1591-1592. It must have scored a startling success if it was the Play cited by Nashe in his *Pierce Penniless* which was licensed in August 1592. Nashe wrote, "how would it have joyed brave Talbot, the terror of the French, to think that after he had been two hundred years in his tomb he should triumph again on the Stage and have his bones embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators (at least, at several times) who in the tragedian that represented his person, beheld him fresh bleeding."

*The First Part of King Henry the Sixth* is vivid and crude. Mr. Masfield writes of it: "the work as a whole is one of the old formless Chronicle Plays which inspired the remark that if an English Dramatist were to make a Play of St. George he would begin with the birth of the Dragon." He adds: "Shakespeare's mind could never at any stage of his career have sunk to conceive the disgusting scene in which Joan of Arc pleads."

This Part deals mainly with the fighting in France and depicts it with a reckless confusion. Talbot, for instance, dies lamenting his son,

Where is my other life ? mine own is gone :

Oh, where's young Talbot ? Where is valiant John ?

before Joan of Arc is burnt in Anjou. The real Talbot fell fighting about twenty-two years after she had suffered in Rouen. Of course, there is no historic foundation for the Scene in the Temple Garden when the roses are plucked. The Wars of the Roses were not known by that name till they were ending or over, and the Red Rose appears to have been borne first as a badge by Owen Tudor in Wales. This



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Scene and the next, in which Mortimer (as he dies in the Tower) explains his right to the Throne to Richard Plantagenet, who knew all about it already, may have been added by Shakespeare in a revision when he wished to connect this Part with the others. In the Second Part Richard Plantagenet is called Richard, Duke of York. He explains the rights of his House over again, and this would not have been necessary if the First Part had then belonged to the Play.

The First Part does not seem to have been printed before 1623. Forms of the two other Parts were printed as the *First Part of the Contention betwixt the two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* in 1594 and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York and the Death of Good King Henry the Sixth* in 1595. These were reprinted separately in 1600 and together in 1619 as the *Whole Contention between the two famous Houses, Lancaster and York, divided into two parts and newly corrected and enlarged*. These two Plays seem to have been acted before September 1592, for Robert Greene, who died in that month, parodied a verse in the Third Part,

Oh, Tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide

in his *Groat'sworth of Wit*.

The title-page of the Quarto edition of the *True Tragedy* said that it was "sundry times acted by the Right Honourable the Earl of Pembroke his Servants." Henslowe's Diary stated that the new *Henry the Sixth* was acted fifteen times in 1592, and Nashe cannot have written *Pierce Penniless* later than July in that year. If Henslowe's Play was the First Part of *King Henry the Sixth* it is improbable that ten thousand spectators could have seen it at the Rose when Nashe wrote, and since that Play succeeded and was shown through the year it is not likely that the two other Parts would have followed it before the month of September. Neither is it likely that if Shakespeare had written the three Parts a rival Company would have acted the Third while the First was being shown on the Stage.

It may be that the Second Part (the *Contention*) was Henslowe's *Henry the Sixth* and Pembroke's Men may have performed the Third Part (the *True Tragedy*) competing

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with it. Greene may have parodied a popular line written by Marlowe in the *True Tragedy*, meaning to indicate that he was one of the men who wrote the *Contention*. The verse

Oh, Tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide,  
is in the speech beginning

She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France,  
which was written either by Marlowe (as many students have thought) or as a deliberate imitation of him. When Nashe, writing a few months after Lord Strange's Men had produced "*Henry the Sixth*," said that ten thousand spectators (at least, at several times) had embalmed Talbot with tears he may have meant that the Pageant of the fighting in France had been acted several times before 1592. Indeed, he may not have referred to Shakespeare's Pageant at all, for this theme must have been a popular one and often shown on the Stage, as was asserted in the Epilogue to *King Henry the Fifth*,

Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crowned King  
Of France and England, did this King succeed;  
Whose state so many had the managing  
That they lost France, and made his England bleed,  
Which oft our Stage hath shown.

It may be that Shakespeare founded his Pageant of the fighting in France on an old Chronicle History when he was beginning to write. Marlowe and Greene and Peele may have written a form of *The Contention* about 1591, and may have sold it to Strange's Men, who may have employed Shakespeare to alter it. Greene's complaint proved that Shakespeare had not been working with him and the other Dramatists whose feathers were taken. Marlowe and Greene and Peele may have written *The True Tragedy* meanwhile and may have sold it to Pembroke's Men because they resented the fact that a mere Player had improved *The Contention* and had been given all the credit of it. This would explain not only why Greene raged against Shake-scene in 1592 and why Pembroke's Men may have performed the *True Tragedy* while "*Henry the Sixth*" was shown at the Rose but also

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why Francis Meres did not cite *King Henry the Sixth* among Shakespeare's Tragedies in *Palladis Tamia* in 1598 and why the three Parts are dissimilar.

The First Part is a primitive Pageant which seems made from the stock of the Traditional Stage. It may have ended with the fourth Scene of the fifth Act—

So now dismiss your army when ye please,  
For here we entertain a solemn peace,

before Shakespeare revised it, introducing the King (who was aged about ten when Joan of Arc suffered) when he wished to connect it with the two other Parts. The Second Part, *The Contention*, is a Rhetorical Pageant in Blank Verse, which seems to have been written mainly by Marlowe and Greene and Peele, combined with Comical Scenes in Prose which were probably inserted by Shakespeare. The Third Part, *The True Tragedy*, is the most mature of the three, a masculine Pageant in Blank Verse, and it seems to have been written mainly by Marlowe with some assistance from Greene and Peele. In this Part, the King's title to the Throne is debated in the first Scene of the first Act, as it is in the second Scene of the second Act of the Second Part, and this and a comparison of the lists of the Characters would be enough to suggest that these two are separate Plays.

Shakespeare may have bought the *True Tragedy* after 1595, and linked it with the two other Parts when he was shaping his Pageant. In it there is a pause in the fighting: the Stage direction says "alarms still, and then enter Henry solus," and the King in a speech of thirteen lines laments the Wars, saying

Would God that I were dead, so all were well !  
Or would my crown suffice, I were content  
To yield it them and lead a private life.

Then the man who has killed his father in ignorance and the other who has killed his son enter, and the King grieves with them. In the Third Part, as we have it, this glimpse of pity becomes the core of the Play. In the fifth Scene of the second Act the King's long meditation, beginning,

This battle fares like to the morning war

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closely resembles King Richard the Second's in the third Scene of the third Act of the Play called by his name, beginning

What must the King do now? Must he submit?  
and his exclamation

Oh, piteous spectacle! Oh bloody times!  
resembles the Abbot's in *King Richard the Second*,

A woeful Pageant have we here beheld.

This Scene clashes with the mood of this Part. If Shakespeare bought the *True Tragedy* after he had written the last part of *Richard the Second* he may have added this Scene to make the Kings similar and to show the same weakness and kindness fatal when his Pageant began and when it drew to a close. And this meditation seems his own comment on the Wars of his Pageant.

When Samuel Johnson wrote that Shakespeare had intended the Plays from *King Richard the Second* to *King Henry the Fifth* to be considered one work he observed that the three Parts of *King Henry the Sixth* and *King Richard the Third* have scant connection with them. These four separate Plays are closely united: *King Richard the Third* has more in common with the First Part of *King Henry the Sixth* than with the others, but it is the Third Part of the Contention between the Houses of York and Lancaster. The King's prophetic denunciation of Gloster and Gloster's soliloquy, beginning,

What will the aspiring blood of Lancaster  
Sink into the ground? I thought it would have mounted,

in the sixth Scene of the fifth Act of the Third Part of *King Henry the Sixth* (which were in the *True Tragedy*, and seem to have been written by Marlowe) are the real beginning of the *Tragedy of King Richard the Third*. But since King Henry has no part in this Play Queen Margaret is brought back from France to speak in his stead. In the last lines of *King Henry the Sixth* (as in the *True Tragedy*) she was banished to France, where in fact she took refuge and died poor and



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forgotten. In the third Scene of the first Act of this Play she appears without explanation of her presence among her enemies and curses them freely. Hastings says,

My hair doth stand on end to hear her curses,  
and Rivers replies

And so doth mine, I muse why she is at liberty.  
She appears again in the fourth Act and says,

So now prosperity begins to mellow  
And drop into the rotten mouth of Death,  
Here, in these confines, sily have I lurked  
To watch the waning of my adversaries :  
A dire induction am I witness to,  
And will to France.

Queen Margaret is employed in this Play like a Senecan ghost demanding revenge. The Duchess of York says to her in this Scene,

Blind sight, dead life, poor mortal-living ghost,  
Rest thy unrest on England's fruitful earth,

and Queen Elizabeth says to her,

Oh thou did'st prophesy the time would come  
When I should wish for thee to help me curse  
That bottled spider, that foul, bunch-backed toad.

Queen Margaret exults in her knowledge of their sorrow and says,

Fare-well, York's wife, and Queen of sad mischance,  
These English woes will make me smile in France,

and Queen Elizabeth says,

Oh thou, well-skilled in curses, stay awhile  
And teach me how to curse mine enemies.

There would have been no need to employ Queen Margaret if this part of the Pageant had been already controlled by King Henry the Sixth's final prophecy. Neither would there have been any need for Gloucester to proclaim his enormity

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if he had done this already in *King Henry the Sixth*. The fact that the speech at the beginning of this Play seems an echo of his other soliloquy may be a sign that Shakespeare wrote it after 1592 and before he had annexed the *True Tragedy*.

*King Richard the Third* was printed in Quartos in 1597, 1598, 1602, 1605, 1612, 1622, 1629 and 1634. All these editions except the first were ascribed to Shakespeare. The Folio has many small changes and omits some lines and adds some two hundred. There had been other Plays on this theme, for instance, a Latin imitation of Seneca which was acted at Cambridge before 1583 and the *True Tragedy of King Richard the Third*, which was printed in 1594; and we have no reason to doubt that the Hunch-back had gnashed his teeth often on the Traditional Stage. I think that the Scenes in which the hideous King fascinates the Lady Anne first and Queen Elizabeth later (like the similar one in the *Third Part of King Henry the Sixth*, in which Lady Grey subjugates King Edward the Fourth) survive from old Plays because I do not believe that Shakespeare or any man of his time was primitive enough to imagine them. The Scene before the battle of Bosworth is frankly preposterous. After this the Play is hurriedly finished. The King appears in a Scene thirteen lines long and shouts for a horse and disappears and then (according to the Stage-direction) he enters again with Richmond and fights with him and is killed, and the victor goes out, "retreat and flourish," but this is not in the Play. Then in a last Scene Richmond enters and says,

The days is ours; the bloody dog is dead,  
and Derby brings him the Crown, saying,

Lo, here, this long usurped royalty,  
From the dead temples of this bloody wretch  
Have I plucked off,

and Richmond says,

We will unite the white rose and the red.  
Smile Heaven upon this fair conjunction,  
That long have frowned upon their enmity!  
What traitor hears me and says not Amen?

## KING RICHARD THE THIRD

England hath long been mad, and scarred herself. . . .  
Now civil wounds are stopped, peace lives again :  
That she may long live here, God say Amen !

This is the end of an old Chronicle Pageant not of a Tragedy.

I think that in Shakespeare's first version Clarence was drowned in the traditional butt of malmsey and that this was seen to be ludicrous and the First Murderer compromised in a revision, saying,

Take that and that : if all this will not do,  
I'll drown you in the malmsey butt within.

The Second Murderer thinks that Clarence is dead when he is carried away ; he says,

A bloody deed, and desperately dispatched !  
How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hands  
Of this most grievous, guilty murder done.

But Clarence's Ghost appears to have forgotten the stabbing : it says,

I, that was washed to death with fulsome wine,  
Poor Clarence by thy guile betrayed to death.

I think that the Stage-direction " enter Richard and Richmond ; they fight ; Richard is slain " refers to a spectacle introduced by the Players. The last Scene does not suggest that the sickly youth Richmond had been able to kill his terrible enemy. As a matter of fact, the King could not reach him at Bosworth and was killed by the troopers in the thick of the fight, and his Crown was brought to one of the Stanleys (either Lord Stanley, afterwards the first Earl of Derby, or his brother Sir William), who gave it to Richmond. The last Scene, as we have it, is consistent with this.

Shakespeare must have been a beginner when he first wrote this Play. There was to be a time when he was able to take North's version of Plutarch's *Life of Antonius* and found a noble Tragedy on it. Now he used Sir Thomas More's *Life of King Richard the Third* or Holinshed's repetition of

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it, for instance, in the Scene in the Tower, in the third Act, and if that Scene is compared with More's narrative it sounds like a child's echo of a Tragical story told by a man.

The Latin version of More's *Life of King Richard* may have been based on one by Cardinal Morton. Though Morton's view may have been distorted by hatred the picture of King Richard is life-like. He is shown repenting the murder of the two little Princes. Here is More's English version : " I have heard by credible report of such as were secret with his chamberers that he never had quiet in his mind, never thought himself sure. When he went abroad, his eyes whirled about, his body privily fenced, his hand ever on his dagger, his countenance and his manner like one always ready to strike again. He took ill rests at night, lay long waiting and musing, sore wearied with care and watch, rather slumbered than slept, troubled with fearful dreams, suddenly sometimes started up, leapt out of bed and ran about the chamber ; so was his restless heart continually tossed and tumbled with the tedious impression and stormy remembrance of this abominable deed." This picture is possible but Shakespeare's is not.

It may be that Shakespeare's first form of this Pageant and the *True Tragedy of King Richard the Third* and the *True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York* were all based on a Chronicle History performed by the Strolling Players soon after the Hunch-back had been seen on the Throne. Shakespeare, I think, wrote his first form as a Revenge-play when he was beginning to write and revised it about 1596 before he meant to use the *True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York* in this Pageant. The primitive work in this Play has the vigour and crudity of the *First Part of King Henry the Sixth*, and its effect is transformed by the note struck in the noble beginning and by the beauty and dignity of a few other passages, such as Clarence's dream. By these changes a Play as young as *Titus Andronicus* was ennobled to one which foretold the supremacy of *Macbeth* and *Othello*.

*The Tragedy of King Richard the Second* was printed in Quartos twice in 1597 and again in 1608, "with new additions of the Parliament Scene and the deposing of King Richard,"



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and in 1615 and 1634. The First Folio edition is the Quarto of 1608 expanded a little and corrected in places.

There were other Plays dealing with this unfortunate King. One, *The Life and Death of Jack Straw*, was written about 1587 and printed in 1593; another, which is in the Egerton Manuscripts in the British Museum, does not seem to have been printed before 1870, and a third, which Simon Forman saw acted in 1611, is lost.

There are two separate Plays or Scenes of the Pageant in *King Richard the Second*. In the first of these King Richard is drawn as a detestable tyrant; he is suspicious and crafty, he distrusts Norfolk and Bolingbroke and banishes both. When he hears of John of Gaunt's illness, he says,

Now put it, God, in the physician's mind,  
To help him to his grave immediately!  
The lining of his coffers shall make coats  
To deck our soldiers for these Irish Wars.

He insults the dying man, calls him,

A lunatic, lean-witted fool,  
Presuming on an ague's privilege,

and says,

And let them die, that age and sullens have:  
For both hast thou and both become the grave.

And when his uncle is dead he seizes all his belongings, saying,

Think what you will, we seize into our hands,  
His plate, his goods, his money and his lands.

Meanwhile John of Gaunt has been shown as a patriot, and so has Bolingbroke who goes into exile, saying,

Where'er I wander, boast of this I can,  
Though banished, yet a true-born Englishman.

This part, I think, was fashioned by others from an old rhyming Chronicle History. Here is a sample of it in the first Act,

This we prescribe, though no physician,  
Deep malice makes too deep incision:

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Forget, forgive, conclude and be agreed ;  
Our Doctors say this is no month to bleed.  
Good Uncle, let this end where it begun :  
We'll calm the Duke of Norfolk, you your son.

This is worthy of the Poet who wrote,

Oh where's young Talbot ? Where is valiant John ?

I think that Shakespeare did little to this vigorous part.

When the King reappears in the third Act he is totally changed. When he is asked "How brooks your Grace this air ?" he replies,

Needs must I like it well : I weep for joy  
To stand upon my kingdom once again.  
Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,  
Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs :  
As a long-parted mother with her child,  
Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,  
So weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth.

Like Queen Margaret, he thinks of his enemies as spiders and toads and invokes curses on them, and he adds

Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords :  
This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones  
Prove armed soldiers, ere her native King  
Shall falter under foul Rebellion's arms.

He says,

Not all the water in the rough rude sea  
Can wash the balm off from an anointed King ;  
The breath of worldly men cannot depose  
The deputy elected by the Lord.

I think that with the second Scene in the third Act Shakespeare began his *Tragedy of King Richard the Second*. The King is tender and sorrowful ; he says to Aumerle,

For God's sake let us sit upon the ground  
And tell sad stories of the death of Kings,

and when he is about to surrender he says,

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What must the King do now? Must he submit?  
The King shall do it: must he be deposed?  
The King shall be contented: must he lose  
The name of King? of God's name, let it go:  
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,  
My gorgeous Palace for a hermitage,  
And my large Kingdom for a little grave,  
A little little grave, an obscure grave.

It is no wonder that the Queen says in the fifth Act,

What, is my Richard both in shape and mind  
Transformed and weakened?

He replies,

In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire  
With good old folks, and let them tell thee tales  
Of woeful ages long ago betid:  
And ere thou bid good-night, to quit their griefs,  
Tell thou the lamentable tale of me.  
And send the hearers weeping to their beds.

York describes how the King enters London:

Men's eyes  
Did scowl on gentle Richard; no man cried "God save him!"  
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home:  
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head;  
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,  
His face still combating with tears and smiles,  
The badges of his grief and patience.

This might have been written of King Henry the Sixth, and  
when the King meditates at Pomfret he speaks in Hamlet's  
vein,

Thoughts tending to content flatter themselves  
That they are not the first of fortune's slaves  
Nor shall not be the last. . . .  
This music mads me; let it sound no more;  
For though it have help mad-men to their wits,  
In me it seems it will make wise men mad.

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In the first part Bolingbroke and Norfolk are noble and the King is rapacious and the curses are invoked on his head. In the second part Bolingbroke is a treacherous rebel and a murderer who betrays his own tool. When Exton says to him,

From your own mouth, my lord, did I this deed,  
he replies,

They love not poison, that do poison need,  
Nor do I thee, though I did wish him dead,

and now the curses which are destined to bring so many calamities are due to his crimes.

The fifth Act and the end of the fourth seem founded on an old rhyming Chronicle which survives in such couplets as

Speak it in French, King, say "Pardonne moi."  
Dost thou teach pardon pardon to destroy?

but most of the second part of the Play is a mild imitation of Marlowe's *Edward the Second*.

If the two parts were taken as composing one Play there would be no defence for these changes; but they are explained by the treatment of King Richard's calamity as a different theme. I think that the second Part was written by Shakespeare in 1593 as a separate Tragedy or Tragical Poem. While he imitated *Edward the Second* he had *The Massacre at Paris* in mind. Guise says in that Play,

Set me to scale the high Pyramides,  
And thereon set the diadem of France,  
I'll either rend it with my nails to naught,  
Or mount the top with my aspiring wings,  
Although my downfall be the deepest hell.

And King Richard says,

Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot  
Unlikely wonders; how these vain weak nails  
May tear a passage through the flinty ribs  
Of this hard world, my ragged prison-walls  
And for they cannot, die in their own pride.



## KING HENRY THE FOURTH

It may be that Shakespeare wrote the second part of this Play as the beginning of the Contest which ended in the Wars of the Roses and that he made the King plaintive and innocent because the calamities entailed by his doom would not have been merited if his fate had been just. This part may have failed on the Stage because the spectators were accustomed to see a different picture of King Richard the Second. This would account for the facts that he seems to have turned from his Pageant to other work for three years and that he spoilt this Play by prefixing a careless revision of the first part which showed the usual King.

I think that he revised it about 1596 to make it a part of the Pageant and tacked it to *King Henry the Fourth* in the fifth Act where Bolingbroke says,

Can no man tell of my unthrifty son ?  
'Tis full three months since I did see him last. . . .  
Inquire at London 'mongst the Taverns there,  
For there, they say, he daily doth frequent  
With unrestrainèd loose companions.

Prince Hal was about twelve when King Richard died, so according to this he began his revelling early. Another link which connects this Play with *King Henry the Fourth* and *King Henry the Fifth* is the fact that the two later Kings remember the doom entailed on their House and pray to be delivered from it. This doom was invoked when the pious King Richard foretold the Wars of the Roses :

Tell Bolingbroke—for yond methinks he stands—  
That every stride he makes upon my land  
Is dangerous treason : he is come to open  
The purple testament of bleeding war ;  
But ere the Crown he looks for live in peace,  
Ten thousand bloody crowns of mother's sons  
Shall ill become the flower of England's face.

The *First Part of King Henry the Fourth* was printed in a Quarto edition early in 1598 as *The History of Henry the Fourth ; with the battle at Shrewsbury, between the King and Lord Henry Percy, surnamed Henry Hotspur of the North.*

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*With the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstaff.* There were other Quarto editions in 1599, 1604, 1608, 1613, 1622, 1632 and 1639. The Stationers' Register has an entry dated August the fourth, 1600, "*Henry the Fifth*, a book to be stayed"; and one dated August the twenty-third of the same year, "two books, one called *Much Ado About Nothing*, the other *The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth with the Humours of Sir John Falstaff*." This may mean that the *First Part of King Henry the Fourth* was printed as if the Play was complete, and that *King Henry the Fifth* was prepared for the press before the *Second Part of King Henry the Fourth* and then postponed till the other Play had been published in 1600.

We do not know when the *First Part of King Henry the Fourth* was written. Mr. Chalmers contended that the opening lines plainly allude to the fighting in Spain in 1596. But they plainly allude to King Henry's hope to lead a Crusade "in stronds afar remote." And Sir Israel Gollancz thinks that the words in *The Return from Parnassus*, "I shall no sooner open this pint-pot, but the word like a knave tapster will cry, 'Anon, anon, Sir!'" seem to be obvious reminiscences of the tapster's reply "Anon, anon, Sir!" But they only mean that the old tapsters said this in the same way as their successors were accustomed to answer "Coming, Sir, coming!"

There were allusions in 1598 when Meres in *Palladis Tamia* wrote, "There is nothing but roguery in villainous man," and when Toby Mathew wrote to Dudley Carleton, "Honour pricks them on, and the World thinks that Honour will quickly prick them off again." And there may have been one in 1599 when Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour*, which was acted first in that year, ended with the words, "You may (in time) make lean Macilente as fat as Sir John Fal-Staffe." But these allusions merely support the First Quarto's evidence that this Part was performed about 1598.

The curious construction seems to indicate that this Play was compounded from two opposite parts. Two contrasted stories are told in it. In the first Scene in a Palace in London the King hears of Hotspur's triumph at Holmedon and regrets that his own son is so different,

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Whilst I, by looking on the praise of him,  
See riot and dishonour stain the brow  
Of my young Harry.

In the second Scene Prince Hal is shown living in riot and dishonour with Falstaff. In the third Scene, in the Palace, Hotspur meets and defies the King and plans a rebellion. Throughout the Play, Scenes of a Rhetorical Pageant in Blank Verse are in conflict with others of vulgar humour in Prose, and Hotspur is contrasted with Falstaff. This contrast was found in the *Famous Victories of King Henry the Fifth*, which was written by men who worked carelessly in different moods and made a patchwork between them. But the Falstaff Scenes are not patches. The opposite Plays in the *First Part of King Henry the Fourth* are too admirable to have been written together. Shakespeare could not have turned from Falstaff's loud laughter to Hotspur's proud eloquence again and again any more than Cervantes could have written *Don Quixote* with a fantastic Romance.

Cervantes intended to ridicule the Spanish and Portuguese Romances of Chivalry; but he wrote one more chivalrous than any of these: he set out to tell the adventures of a farcical Knight; but he found that his own sad heart rode with Don Quixote. He was guided by the Italian travesties, such as Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, begun about 1482, in which the hero Renaud of *Les Quatre Fils Aymon* became the lovelorn Rinaldo, and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, in which the hero of the *Chanson de Roland* became Orlando and went out of his mind and massacred sheep, thinking them Saracens. Their fantastic mood had been natural, for Italy had never been chivalrous; but his echo of it derided things he had loved. Still, he did not mock Chivalry, but only the wild Romances dealing with it, and the two which were praised first by Don Quixote in the first Chapter of the Second Part (when he said "Quién mas honesto y mas valiente que el famoso *Amadis de Gaula*? quién mas discreto que *Palmerin de Inglaterra*?") were spared when all the rest were condemned. The third praised by Don Quixote (when he said "Quién mas acomodado y manual que *Tirante el Blanco*?") may have founded the fashion, for it was printed as *Tirant lo Blanch* in

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1490 while *Amadis de Gaula* does not seem to have been printed before 1508. All three were linked with the English home of Romance of which Boiardo wrote in his *Orlando Innamorato*,

Fu gloriosa Bertagna la grande  
Una stagion per l'arme e per l'amore. . . .  
Ed or sua fama al nostro tempo dura.

Johannot Martorell, who began *Tirant lo Blanch* in 1460 and wrote three of its Parts, said that he had translated them from English into Portuguese and then into Catalan, and though this may have been only a conventional statement he copied *Guy of Warwick* and set some of the story in England.

Garci or Garcia de Montalvo, who wrote the first books of *Amadis de Gaula* between 1492 and 1504, set his story mainly in England, using, for instance, the name Vindilisor for Windsor. And when Francisco de Moraes wrote *Palmerin de Inglaterra* about 1544 he chose an English hero and drew the romantic City of London. Like *Tirant lo Blanch*, these two later Romances may have been Portuguese before they were Spanish, for Montalvo seems to have founded *Amadis* on a Portuguese version written by Joham de Lobeira, and *Palmerin de Inglaterra* seems to have been written in Portuguese first. In any case they were compounded from International stories, including the French and Celtic Romances. When *Primaleon*, which was printed in 1512, was described as translated from Greek to Castilian this may have been an admission that this school of stories revived the mood of such Greek Romances as *Apollonius of Tyre*.

The conquering spirit of Portugal and Spain in the days when those Countries led the World in discoveries chimed with the old tales of adventure. These books were loved by the wanderers who named California after an Island described in *Las Sergas de Esplandian*, printed in 1508; and *Amadis* is said to have been printed in some thirty editions before 1587. Mr. Henry Thomas writes in his *Spanish and Portuguese Romances of Chivalry*: "During the hundred years following the publication of *Amadis of Gaul*, some fifty new chivalresque Romances appeared in Spain and Portugal. They were published at an average rate of almost one a year



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between 1508 and 1550; nine were added between 1550 and the year of the Armada; only three more came out before the publication of *Don Quixote*." Their vogue ended with Spain's conquering mood when the Invincible Armada was shattered.

When the First Part of *Don Quixote* was printed in 1605 Cervantes was about fifty-eight and he had known many miseries and many adventures: he wrote as a man, already old and despairing, who had been maimed on the glorious day of Lepanto when he was young and had seen the supremacy of his Nation depart. But even now, though he derided the dead Romances, he did not dream of insulting the Chivalry which had governed his life and is immortal in the nature of Spain.

Shakespeare was some twenty years younger when the *First Part of King Henry the Fourth* was printed in 1598, and his life had been tame and his position was servile. There is no sign in his Plays that Malory or Froissart attracted him or that he had any belief in the old visions of Chivalry. It is probable that he was in London in 1588, and he may have shared England's conquering mood then; but it had faded in 1598, and the old popularity of the Chronicle Histories was departing with it when he contrasted them with a picture of the everyday World. Falstaff lives in his Pageant like Sancho Panza in the tale of *Don Quixote*, or like Bottom in Fairyland, and his laughter (like Sancho's) announced that an immemorial fashion was dead.

Shakespeare wrote in this Play with his accustomed neglect of the historical facts, for though the real Prince fought at Shrewsbury, he was only sixteen then and did not kill the fierce Hotspur who was then about forty. And the tale ends in laughter when Falstaff rises up from feigned death to stab the dead hero and pretends to have killed him and carries him off to claim the reward. Hotspur's great dreams have ended in the derision of fools.

The two Parts of *King Henry the Fourth* and the *Life of King Henry the Fifth* could have been printed as the Three Parts of *King Henry the Fifth*, and they were all founded on the *Famous Victories of King Henry the Fifth, containing the*

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*Honourable Battle of Agincourt* which was licensed in 1594 and printed in 1598. The King, who had appeared as Bolingbroke in *King Richard the Second*, is changed in the same way as King Richard is in that Pageant. He begins,

So shaken as we are, so wan with care,  
Find we a time for frightened peace to pant.

He is as melancholy as the later King Richard and King Henry the Sixth and Hamlet. He meditates, in the Second Part :

Oh God ! that one might read the book of fate  
And see the revolution of the times ! . . .

Oh, if this were seen  
The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,  
What perils past, what crosses to ensue  
Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.

In the First Part of the Play called by his name because it dealt with his Reign, he is in the background and Hotspur is the Tragical figure. In the Play called *King Henry the Fifth*, Prince Hal has been changed to a repetition of Hotspur. Indeed, we might take the picture of Hotspur as the first sketch of King Henry the Fifth. This Play or Dramatic Recitation was meant to be a pæan of patriotism : it is the climax of all the praises of England in the rest of the Pageant and it is an echo of Marlowe's conquering mood.

King Henry the Fifth was England's national hero, the last King who had conquered in France, and he must have been often seen on the Traditional Stage. Nashe wrote in *Pierce Penniless* : " If you tell them what a glorious thing it is to have Henry the Fifth represented on the Stage, leading the French King prisoner, and forcing both him and the Dauphin to swear fealty." This Play, which is linked with the Traditional Stage by the *Famous Victories of King Henry the Fifth*, keeps a great deal of the old Traditional stuff, for instance, the Scene in which the French Lords begin in French to explain who they are and then continue their conversation in English and the Scenes in which a Scot and a Welshman and an Irishman talk and those in which Katharine attempts to speak English. This was the fashion which Philip Sidney had condemned in his *Apology for Poesy*, written

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about 1581, as "against the law of hospitality to jest at strangers, because they speak not English as well as we do." This obsolete stuff and the Comedy of Pistol are blended with Shakespeare's only Poem of Conquest.

One clue to the date of *King Henry the Fifth* is in the Prologue to the fifth Act :

Were now the general of our gracious Empress,  
As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,  
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,  
How many would the peaceful city quit,  
To welcome him !

Though there was constant fighting in Ireland it seems safe to conclude that this general was Essex, who went to his disastrous command there in March, 1599, and returned in September of that year in disgrace, and we can infer that these lines were written while there was hope of his triumph. This passage is one of the signs that the Prologues in this Play were written before 1600 though they were not printed in the Quarto editions. Even this clue tells us little, for Shakespeare might have added these verses in a revision in 1599.

There would be another clue if we could be certain that John Marston was drawn as Pistol, as Mr. George Wyndham and Mr. Seccombe and Mr. Allen suggested. Shakespeare may have applied the name Pistol to Marston, who seems to have carried a pistol and to have been accustomed to beatings, for Jonson told Drummond of Hawthornden that he had many quarrels with Marston and beat him and took his pistol from him. This clue would agree with the other, for the War of the Poets began about 1598, and the picture of Marston may have been part of Shakespeare's share in that feud.

Nicholas Breton wrote in his *Post with a Packet of Mad Letters*, printed in 1603, "I saw the Play of Ancient Pistol where a craking coward was well cudgelled for his knavery." This suggests that the Play of Ancient Pistol was written and acted as a separate Interlude since he could hardly have used this name for the *History of King Henry the Fifth*. If so, Shakespeare may have combined a shortened version of it with his Rhetorical Pageant in the same way as he seems

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to have blended Falstaff's Comedy with *King Henry the Fourth*, and this would explain why the Quarto edition, printed in 1600 and 1602, and either in 1608 or 1613, was called the *Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth with his battle at Agincourt in France. Together with Ancient Pistol*.

Pistol does not appear in the *First Part of King Henry the Fourth*. In the *Second Part* he appears in the second Act after Doll Tearsheet has said of him that he is "a swaggerer and the foul-mouthedst rogue in England" (which resembles the account of Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida*), and after a little ranting in a parody of Marlowe and Peele, he is driven out of the room by Falstaff, and he is seen again in the fifth Act when in the same vein he announces the King's death and again at the end when he only says a few words. This use of Pistol, which seems a mere repetition of a Character already familiar, may be one of the signs that the *Second Part of King Henry the Fourth* was written after *King Henry the Fifth*. Pistol is seen in a similar subordinate way in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. If Marston was drawn as Pistol in the War of the Poets, it is probable that the chief picture of him, the one in which he is cudgelled, was the first and that the others were mere reappearances of a popular butt. That picture seems drawn from life: Coleridge said in his seventh Lecture on Shakespeare, "I know no Character in the Plays (unless indeed Pistol be an exception) which can be called the mere portrait of an individual."

In the Epilogue to the *Second Part of King Henry the Fourth* the Dancer says: "Be it known to you, as it is very well, I was lately here in the end of a displeasing Play, to pray your patience for it, and to promise you a better. I meant indeed to pay you with this; which, if like an ill venture it come unluckily home, I break and you, my gentle creditors, lose." It seems reasonable to conclude that the Dancer referred to a Play written by Shakespeare. The Folio of 1623 prints no Epilogue admitting a failure and promising a popular Play; but it seems to omit many Epilogues, for we have reason to think that one was always spoken before the dancing began. And it may be that this lost Epilogue admitting a failure was at the end of *King John*.



## KING JOHN

All we know about the date of *King John* is that Meres mentioned it in *Palladis Tamia* in 1598. It is possible that he was referring to *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, which was printed in 1591 without a writer's name, and in 1611 as written by W. Sh., and in 1622 as by W. Shakespeare; but it is more probable that he had in mind a recent revision of it now represented by *The Life and Death of King John*, which seems to have appeared first in the Folio of 1623. This would explain why he cited it at the end of his list of Chronicle Histories—*King Richard the Second, King Richard the Third, King Henry the Fourth and King John*.

The two Parts of *The Troublesome Reign* seem to have been roughly shaped by Marlowe and others from a Traditional Play written while King Henry the Eighth was making War on the Monks. Shakespeare struck out the ribald scenes about Monks, though he still made the King speak in the attitude of King Henry the Eighth,

Thou canst not, Cardinal, devise a name  
So slight, unworthy and ridiculous,  
To charge me to an answer as the Pope.  
Tell him this tale; and from the mouth of England  
Add this much more, that no Italian priest  
Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;  
But as we under Heaven are Supreme Head,  
So under Him that great supremacy  
Where we do reign, we will alone uphold.

In this he followed the authors of *The Troublesome Reign* who held that King John was a forerunner of King Henry the Eighth,

Whose arms shall reach unto the Gates of Rome,  
And with his foot tread down the strumpet's pride,  
That sits upon the chair of Babylon.

The same view of King John's defiance of Rome was held by John Bale, a belligerent Protestant who had been a Carmelite Friar when he was young, and was Bishop of Ossory in King Edward the Sixth's time. We do not know when Bale wrote his *King Johan*, which does not seem to have been printed before 1838, but it was probably before 1540, the year in

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which he first fled to Germany after Cromwell had fallen, for after that time he must have doubted the piety of King Henry the Eighth. The "Interlude concerning King John," which (according to the *Calendar of State Papers*) was acted for Cranmer in 1538, may have been a form of this play.

The fact that Shakespeare's *King John* does not seem to have been printed before 1623 may be a sign that it was unpopular, and this may have been due to the fact that the ribaldry was omitted from it.

*The Life and Death of King John* is openly founded on *The Troublesome Reign*. It begins with a Scene in which King John defies France and says,

Our Abbeyes and our Priories shall pay  
This expedition's charge.

Then the Bastard Faulconbridge enters as a young hero of old-fashioned Romance and immediately proves his royal descent. Then come the usual arguments and the usual curses: Constance says,

Oh lawful let it be  
That I have room with Rome to curse awhile.

The Play ends with the King dying of poison after surrendering his Crown to the Pope, and Pembroke says that he is singing and the Prince replies,

I am the cygnet to this pale faint swan,  
Who chants a doleful hymn to his own death,  
And from the organ-pipe of frailty sings  
His soul and body to their lasting rest.

Then King John is brought on the Stage, dying in agony, and he says,

I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen  
Upon a parchment, and against this fire  
Do I shrink up. . . .  
And none of you will bid the winter come  
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw,  
Nor let my Kingdom's rivers take their course  
Through my burned bosom, nor entreat the North  
To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips

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And comfort me with cold. I do not ask you much,  
I beg cold comfort.

Here is Shakespeare's own music coming after the false pathos about the pale faint swan singing. The fierce King dies like Lucrece, of whom it was said,

And now this pale swan in her watery nest  
Begins the sad dirge of her certain ending,

or like Emilia in *Othello* who said

I will play the swan  
And die in music.

And even these last verses echo others in *Lust's Dominion*,

Oh, I grow dull, and the cold hand of sleep  
Hath thrust his icy fingers in my breast.

In this Pageant false Pathos (as in the Scene between Arthur and Hubert) and conventional ranting are blended with the dawning supremacy of his Tragical mood.

Mr. Tucker Brooke in his *Tudor Drama* says: "Virtually everything necessary to fit the *Henry the Fourth* Plays for their original purpose as preliminary to a drama on the Reign of Henry the Fifth is accomplished in the *First Part*. . . . The Play needs only Scenes indicating the King's death and the final dismissal of Falstaff to stand forth, as we may suspect it was first designed, perfect in itself and a full induction to the treatment of the hero's triumphant reign." And he says, "the *Second Part of Henry the Fourth*, like the *Second Part of Tamburlaine*, seems to be an originally unpremeditated addition, occasioned by the enormous effectiveness of the by-figure of Falstaff." He adds that "much of it is a mere variation of material already used in the *First*: and the effect of the two Parts when taken together is less that of steady dramatic progress than of a march and counter-march." While agreeing with all this, I think that it is one of the signs that *King Henry the Fifth* was written before the *Second Part of King Henry the Fourth*.

It may be that Shakespeare wrote Hotspur's Tragedy and

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the battle of Shrewsbury as a Scene in his Pageant, and then *King Henry the Fifth* and the battle of Agincourt as another, and then (having completed the Pageant of the Wars of the Roses by filling up the gaps between *King Richard the Second* and *King Richard the Third*) wrote the Comedy of Falstaff suggested by the Comical patches in the old *Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, and then blended this with Hotspur's Tragedy as *King Henry the Fourth* and then wrote an Interlude about Ancient Pistol as a caricature of Marston in the War of the Poets and then used part of this to provide Comical Scenes for *King Henry the Fifth*, and then rewrote *The Troublesome Reign* as a Prelude to a different Pageant of the Contest between the Crown and the Church, which was to include the *History of King Henry the Eighth*, and then after *King John* failed on the Stage (partly because he had taught his audience to look for Comical Scenes in his Pageant) yielded to a demand for a reappearance of Falstaff in the *Second Part of King Henry the Fourth*.

The Epilogue to that *Second Part* ended as follows : " One word more, I beseech you. If you be not too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story, with Sir John in it, and make you merry with fair Katharine of France : where, for anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already a' be killed with your hard opinions, for Oldcastle died a martyr and this is not the man. My tongue is weary : when my legs are too, I will bid you good night : and so kneel down before you ; but, indeed, to pray for the Queen."

This passage seems to have been added by somebody else as a reluctant apology for the use of Oldcastle's name after the Play had been produced on the Stage, for in the Quarto edition the first paragraph of the Epilogue ended with the words " and so kneel down before you, but, indeed, to pray for the Queen." It seems to me that this passage could not have referred to the Pageant of the Triumph of Agincourt, and was a conditional promise of a Comedy " with Sir John in it," bringing Queen Katharine again on the Stage, and I infer that she had already caused merriment in *King Henry the Fifth*. It may be that this promise was left unfulfilled because the *Second Part* was tepidly welcomed. This Part



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is much the more admirable and mature of the two, but (perhaps for that reason) it does not seem to have been liked as well as the other, for we have only one Quarto edition of it while we have seven of the First. Indeed, it has never been popular, for it has been seldom performed. And I infer that the announcement of Falstaff's death was inserted in *King Henry the Fifth* after the second part of the Epilogue was heard on the Stage.

The words "Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man," referred to the fact that the Comical Knight was called Sir John Oldcastle first, as is shown by the Prince's words in the *First Part*, "as the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the Castle." Nicholas Rowe in his *Account of the Life of Shakespeare* explained this alteration: "It may not be improper to observe that this part of Falstaff is said to have been written originally under the name of Oldcastle: some of that family being then remaining, the Queen was pleased to command him to alter it, upon which he made use of Falstaff." This statement may have been based on the one made by William James in his dedication of *The Life and Defence of the Noble Knight and Martyr, Sir John Oldcastle*, printed in 1625, "offence being worthily taken by personages descended from his title, as peradventure by many others who ought to have him in honourable memory."

Sir Sidney Lee is inaccurate when he writes, "Influential objection was taken by Henry Brooke, eighth Lord Cobham, who succeeded to the title on March the fifth, 1596-1597, and claimed descent in the female line from the historical Sir John Oldcastle, the Lollard leader, who sat in the House of Lords as Lord Cobham." This Lord Cobham was not descended from Oldcastle. Joan De la Pole, who was Baroness Cobham in her own right, married five times and left an only child, Joan, by her second husband, Sir Reginald Braybrooke. Her fourth marriage made her Oldcastle's third wife, and her title descended to the Brookes through her daughter, who married Sir Thomas Brooke. Sir John Oldcastle sat in the House of Lords as Lord Cobham, in his wife's right, from 1409, the year when he married her, till 1413, the year when he was arrested, but he was not known by that title: his followers in 1413 used the watchword "for Sir John

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Oldcastle," and the King's proclamation stated that one of their aims was "to divide the realm into confederate districts and to appoint Sir John Oldcastle President of the Commonwealth."

According to all the contemporary authorities Oldcastle led a profligate life till he became the chief of the Lollards; but in later times this was denied by some Protestant writers who thought that he had shared their Religion though if they had read his defence they would have seen their mistake. Still, even Fuller had his doubts about Oldcastle. He wrote of him in his *Worthies of England*, printed in 1662: "It is easily known out of what purse this black penny came, the Papists railing on him for a heretic, and therefore he must also be a coward, though indeed he was a man of arms, every inch of him, and as valiant as any in his Age"; but in his *Church History*, printed in 1655, he says: "Let Mr. Foxe be his compurgator, I dare not, and if my hand were on the book, I would take it back again. Yet so that as I will not acquit, I will not condemn him, but leave all to the revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

If we could be certain that one of the Cobhams intervened in this matter this would give us a clue to the date when the Comedy of Falstaff was first seen on the Stage. William Brooke, seventh Lord Cobham, was Lord Chamberlain for about seven months beginning in August, 1596. Since he seems to have been inclined to Puritanism and was linked through his title with Oldcastle he may have forbidden his Servants to use Oldcastle's name. This would agree with the date commonly accepted by students: Sir Israel Gollancz says, "there is almost unanimity among scholars in assigning the *First Part of Henry the Fourth* to the year 1596-1597." The eighth Lord Cobham (Henry Brooke) had no power over the Chamberlain's Servants and he was in disfavour at Court because he was a Puritan leader, and George Carey, the second Lord Hunsdon, who was Lord Chamberlain after the seventh Lord Cobham (as his father had been before him from 1583 to 1596), disliked the Puritans as much as the Queen did, and would not have intervened in this way any more than she would have done if she had stooped to give the matter a thought.

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The change may have been merely due to the fact that the use of Oldcastle's name had given offence as the Epilogue to the *Second Part* indicates. In 1599 Philip Henslowe employed four of his Dramatists, Anthony Munday, Michael Drayton, Robert Wilson and Richard Hathaway, to compile a Play called the *First Part of the True and Honourable History of the Life of Sir John Oldcastle, the good Lord Cobham*. This Play, which was printed in 1600 or 1619, may have been an answer to Shakespeare's picture of Oldcastle. This seems shown by its Prologue :

It is no pampered glutton we present,  
Nor aged councillor to youthful sin,  
But one whose virtue shone above the rest,  
A valiant martyr and a virtuous Peer.

This was followed in 1601 by John Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs, or the Life and Death of the Valiant Captain and most godly martyr, Sir John Oldcastle, Knight, Lord Cobham*, in which there were quotations from the *Second Part of King Henry the Fourth*. *Sir John Oldcastle* and this Poem seem proofs that there was an outcry against the Comical picture of Oldcastle, which had nothing to do with the fact that Baroness Cobham had been one of his wives.

Anthony Munday was famous for his zeal as a Protestant. He had first become prominent in 1581 when he gave evidence against Father Campion, the Jesuit, who was tortured on the Rack in the Tower by another dramatist, Thomas Norton, one of the authors of the *Tragedy of Gorboduc*, acted in 1561 and printed in 1565. Munday wrote the *English Roman Life* and an attack on Father Campion, which was afterwards used in Holinshed's Chronicle, probably either by John Hooker or John Stow, since Holinshed seems to have died about 1580. The Catholic view of him is expressed, for instance, in the *True Account of the Death and Martyrdom of M. Campion* (which was probably written by Thomas Pound), in which he was called Cogging Munday, "who was first a Stage-Player, no doubt a calling of some credit, after an apprenticeship, which time he well served with deceiving of his master, then wandering towards Italy, became by his own account a cozeners in his journey. Coming to Rome, he



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was charitably received there, but never admitted into the Seminary, as he pleaseth to lie." This view may have been just, for even Topcliffe, who employed him to harry the Catholics, accused him of theft. He may have borne a private grudge against Shakespeare in the same way as Greene did, for he seems to have been the author of *Fidele and Fortunio*, which was one of the sources of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; but his Protestant zeal would have been enough to account for his taking the chief part in writing *Sir John Oldcastle* as he seems to have done. The fact that this Play was written in 1599 or 1600 may show that Oldcastle's name was still retained on the Stage though it had been changed in the Quarto of 1598.

According to the Sidney Papers, Rowland Whyte wrote to Sir Robert Sidney in March, 1599-1600, about a feast given by the Lord Chamberlain, the second Lord Hunsdon, to the Flemish Envoy Verreiken: "upon Thursday my Lord Chamberlain feasted him, and made him a very great and delicate dinner, and there in the afternoon his Players acted before Sir John Oldcastle to his great contentment." Since the Chamberlain's Servants would not have acted a rival play belonging to Henslowe they may have performed the separate Comedy of Falstaff as an Interlude then, still using the name of Oldcastle.

In *A Meeting of Gallants at an Ordinary*, printed in 1604, it was said, "How like you, mine host? Did I not tell you he was a mad round knave and a merry one, too? And if you talk of fat Sir John Oldcastle, he will tell you he was his great-grandfather." Nathaniel Field wrote in *Amends for Ladies*, printed in 1618, "Did you not see the piece in which the fat Knight, hight Oldcastle, told you plainly what was honour?" In the *Wandering Jew Telling Fortunes for Englishmen*, printed in 1640, Glutton says, "I am a fat man. . . . I do not live by the sweat of my brow, but am almost dead by sweating. I eat much but can talk little: Sir John Oldcastle was my great-grandfather's father's uncle: I come of a huge kindred."

William Bagwell in *The Merchant Distressed*, printed in 1644, wrote "they have no skill in martial discipline, yet they begin as if they durst to fight, with Sir John Oldcastle, that



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high-flown Knight." And Fuller wrote in his *Church History of Britain*, that the Stage-Poets "having made themselves very bold and others very merry at the memory of Sir John Oldcastle, whom they have fancied a boon companion, a jovial roysterer, and yet a coward to boot: the best is Sir John Falstaff hath relieved the memory of Sir John Oldcastle and of late is substituted buffoon in his place." It is not likely that Fuller would have written about 1654 that the change had been made "of late" if the name had been altered about 1597.

The name Falstaff was borrowed from the cowardly Knight who is now called Sir John Fastolfe in the *First Part of King Henry the Sixth*. Heminge and Condell printed his name as Falstaff, and this was changed to Fastolfe by Theobald. And this form of the name may have been the traditional one, for Sir John Fastolfe was called Falstaff in Rymer's *Fœdera* and Falstolf in the French Chronicles. The picture of him in *King Henry the Sixth* was as unjust as traditional ones commonly are, for though Talbot accused him of showing cowardice at the Rout of Patay in 1428, Bedford decided that the charge was untrue. Mr. Gairdner suggested in his *Lollardy and the Reformation in England* that Shakespeare used Falstaff's name because it was believed that he had been a Lollard like Oldcastle. But we know a good deal about Fastolfe or Falstaff (through the *Paston Letters*, for instance) and there is no proof that he took sides with the Lollards. It is possible that the fact that he owned the Boar's Head Tavern in Southwark may have led the Players to link Falstaff's adventures with the Boar's Head in Eastcheap; but nothing recorded of him shows any resemblance to the Comical Knight.

Shakespeare found Oldcastle named as one of Prince Hal's riotous friends in the *Famous Victories of King Henry the Fifth*. Oldcastle seems to have been one of the figures of the Traditional Plays. Father Robert Parsons, for instance, writing about 1603, spoke of him as "that Ruffian Knight, as all England knows, commonly brought in by the Comedians on their Stage." If Oldcastle was a traditional butt as a fat and cowardly Knight (an English Miles Gloriosus) this would explain why the Players used his name or reverted to

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it after it had been changed in the printed versions of *King Henry the Fourth*.

The change may have been made when the Puritans seemed rising to power and may have been undone while they suffered and restored in the days when they were beginning to triumph. Meanwhile the Quartos may have kept it because it was enforced by their licence. But it was observed in a performance at Court in February 1612-1613 when (according to the Treasurers' Accounts) *Sir John Falstaff*, which may have been the Comedy part from the Pageant, was twice acted by His Majesty's Servants.

It may be that while Shakespeare drew Oldcastle-Falstaff partly from some men of his time (such as Ben Jonson) and partly from his own heart he was faithful to the traditional build, for he could not have drawn a familiar Character strangely. This may help to explain why Falstaff seems to be out of place in Shakespeare's shadowy World and to belong to a more primitive time. Though his philosophy belongs to no Country (for he would have agreed with Omar Khayyam's maxim in the twenty-third Quatrain in Mr. Heron Allen's edition, "Drink, rob on the highway, and be benevolent") he was essentially English; but he sinned and rejoiced with a Mediæval simplicity: he could have ridden with Chaucer's Pilgrims or sung the old verses ascribed to Walter Map,

Meum est propositum in tabernâ mori:  
Vinum sit appositum morientis ori,  
Ut dicant cum venerint Angelorum chori,  
"Deus sit propitius huic peccatori!"

Falstaff seems to belong to Rabelais' World rather than Shakespeare's, but this does not make him less English. Rabelais' loud mirth was not limited by the borders of France, and indeed it might be contended that he drew his Gargantua from King Henry the Eighth. He published the first books of *La Vie du Grand Gargantua* in 1532, about twelve years after France had rung with the doings of the huge English King at the Field of the Cloth of Gold when (according to Hall's Chronicle of England) the motto, "Faicte bonne chere quy voudra," was written over the entrance of the English Pavilion. And King Henry the Eighth (of whom it was recorded that

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the three next fattest men in England could fit into his waistcoat) was a Falstaff compounded with an English Othello.

Chaucer or Rabelais would have left Falstaff rollicking and immortally young, and it may be that Shakespeare had intended to spare him and (though he hanged Bardolph and Nym in *King Henry the Fifth*) had first written that Play without "Sir John in it" partly because he would have spoiled it if he had followed the historical truth by making his hero send him to death. He avoided that risk when he made Falstaff die of disease, and he may have mentioned his death partly because the nature of a Pageant required that the end of the chief people in it should be recorded. Perhaps he made his English Silenus die in despair because he was turning from the glamour of Pageants and the laughter of Comedies to the darkness of truth.

The Prologue to *King Henry the Eighth* begins—

I come no more to make you laugh : things now  
That bear a weighty and a serious brow,  
Sad, high and working, full of state and woe,  
Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow,  
We now present. Those that can pity, here  
May, if they think it well, let fall a tear :  
The subject will deserve it. Such as give  
Their money out of hope they may believe,  
May here find truth too. . . .

Only they  
That come to hear a merry bawdy play,  
A noise of targets, or to see a fellow  
In a long motley coat guarded with yellow,  
Will be deceived, for, gentle hearers, know  
To rank our chosen truth with such a show  
As fool and fight is, besides forfeiting  
Our own brains and the opinion that we bring  
To make that only true we now intend,  
Will leave us never an understanding friend.

Sir Henry Wotton wrote in 1613 (in a letter preserved in

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*Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*) about the burning of the Globe Theatre in that year during "a new Play called *All is True*, representing some principal pieces in the reign of Henry the Eighth." The title *All is True* agrees with the Prologue, but this Pageant, as we have it, does not. This does not seem to have been printed before the Folio of 1623 and there it was called *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth*, and was the last of the Histories.

Coleridge, in his *Classifications* of 1802 and 1819 put this Play in his Third Epoch after *Henry the Fifth*, calling it (in 1819) "a sort of Historical Masque or Show Play." This would be a natural place for it if Shakespeare had planned another Pageant of the Contest between the Crown and the Church which had been introduced by *King John*. But while this Play has the structure of his Chronicle Pageant its manner does not seem to be his.

Some students suggest that he had Fletcher's help in this Play while others contend that Fletcher and Massinger founded it on their recollections of one written by him and lost when the Globe was burnt in 1613. But the Play would not have been lost even if every copy had been burnt with the Globe, for the Players could have remembered their parts, and even if Shakespeare had sought Fletcher's assistance (for once and for no visible reason) he would not have asked him to rewrite the whole Play.

This Pageant has two opposite versions of the historical truth, a Catholic and a Protestant one, and this may explain why a Play partly written by Shakespeare was rewritten and completed by others, perhaps Fletcher and Massinger.

The first three Acts and the second Scene of the fourth are mainly written from a Catholic standpoint: Queen Katharine, another Hermione, is the heroine, the King's scruples and Anne Bullen's reluctance are hypocritical, and Wolsey is shown as he was seen by the Catholics. The picture of Wolsey was copied from Holinshed who had relied mainly on two Catholic books, George Cavendish's *Life of Cardinal Wolsey* (which he probably read in manuscript, for it does not seem to have been printed before the garbled edition of 1641), and Father Campion's account of Wolsey, which was written in 1569 about the time when he was reconciled to



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the Catholic Church. In those days the Catholics ascribed their calamities to Wolsey's ambition and to King Henry the Eighth's amorous nature. So do these three Acts, but in this they differ from Holinshed and from Edward Hall's *Triumphant Reign of Henry the Eighth*, printed in 1542 or 1548, which had also been used in them. All this is changed in the first Scene of the fourth Act and in the fifth Act: Anne Bullen and Cranmer are praised and the story is the Protestant version and seems based on John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments of the Church*, commonly called the Book of Martyrs, printed in Latin in 1559 and in English in 1563. And this part ruins the Play by contradicting the rest.

If the Catholic version of the story was true Queen Katharine was wronged and the King's marriage to Anne Bullen was void and Queen Elizabeth was born illegitimate. Here was reason enough why most of this Play could not have been acted while Queen Elizabeth lived, and besides she could not have wished her father and mother to be shown on the Stage by her own Company, the Chamberlain's Servants. During her life they acted two Plays dealing with King Henry the Eighth's Troublesome Reign, *Sir Thomas More*, printed in 1834, and *Thomas, Lord Cromwell*, printed in 1602, and though the King was important in each he was not shown in either of them. It is probable that the Admiral's Men, who acted Plays concerned with Cardinal Wolsey in 1601 and 1602, were equally cautious; but this is not certain, for these Plays have been lost. But about two years after her death Prince Henry's Company of Players performed Samuel Rowley's *When you See me, you Know me, or the Famous Chronicle of King Henry the Eighth*, and this was rivalled by a Chronicle History of her own early days written by Thomas Heywood and called *If you Know not Me, you Know Nobody*.

In the days when the Queen was nearing her end the Catholics hoped that the new King would show kindness to them for his mother's sake. And many of them thought then that his wife Anne of Denmark shared their religion. They were probably wrong in this, for though Mr. Gardiner in his *History of England* says that she was a Catholic, Father Richard Blount, who succeeded Father Garnet as the head of the English Jesuits, doubted this in a report sent to Rome.

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In any case, she did nothing for them, and King James blighted their hopes, mainly because he needed their fines, and in 1605 the crazy Gunpowder Plot made him their enemy.

If Shakespeare wrote or sketched a form of this Play during the old Queen's last years he must have intended to postpone its performance and may well have supposed that the employment of the Catholic version would not be a drawback when King James had come to the Throne. The first three Acts differ from all the other Scenes of his Pageant except the second part of *King Richard the Second*, and this may be due to the fact that they were not founded on a Chronicle History. It may be that when he had finished his form of the Contest between the Houses of Lancaster and York he turned to the theme chosen by Hall, *The Union of the two noble and illustre families of Lancaster and York and the Reign of the High and Prudent Prince, King Henry the Eighth, the Indubitate Flower and Heir of both the said Lineages*. If so, he no longer depended on the views of the Chronicles, for that Prudent Prince was still distinctly remembered. It may be that when he had written part of a new Pageant, the Scenes showing Buckingham's doom and the Cardinal's fall and Queen Katharine's desertion and death, he turned to Tragical work and (instead of re-writing them in a Protestant version to suit the taste of the times after the Gunpowder Plot) abandoned the task, but allowed his Company to profit by them. And his Company may have employed Fletcher and Massinger to write a Play founded on his Catholic version. This would explain why only the structure of the Catholic part seems to be his and why Heminge and Condell printed the Play as his after his death.

If (as Elze contended) he wrote this Pageant in 1603 the old Queen's death in that year would account for his selecting a theme which would have been banned during her life. This seems a more probable date, for it is not likely that he would have written such a Play at a time when it could not have been acted. And in this case he may have laid this Pageant aside when the Bye-Plot of 1603 aroused ill-feeling against the Catholics and may have abandoned it after the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

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In 1613 he had nearly finished his life-work and had (according to most students) written the last form of *The Tempest*; he had only three years of life left, and it seems certain that he was spending them in Stratford-on-Avon. I do not think that he would have written a Play then with Fletcher or with any one else who was living in London or would have reverted to his old Pageants then or could have planned this one (which is rhetorical and much less dramatic than the real events) after his Tragedies.

In 1613 John Fletcher was at the height of his fame: he had finished the Plays which he had written with Francis Beaumont and probably with others whose names have not been recorded. If Shakespeare's associates had wished to employ somebody to refashion a derelict abandoned by him ten years before this, the choice of Fletcher would have been natural. And since in that year Fletcher, who was then aged thirty-four, began working with Philip Massinger, then aged about thirty, he might well have chosen him to help in his task.

There is no sign that Fletcher was ranked as a friend or an admirer of Shakespeare's: he seems to have belonged to the school who regarded Ben Jonson as the Lord of the Theatre. This may be enough to explain why *King Henry the Eighth* appears to have been re-written throughout, or it may be that Shakespeare stipulated for this when he allowed his old Catholic Pageant to be altered to a Protestant one. I think that Massinger re-wrote the first four Acts and that Fletcher added some passages and wrote the first Scene of the fourth Act and the fifth Act hastily.

Some students have argued that this Play is not Fletcher's because it is unlike his Romantic ones; but it does not differ from *Valentinian*, written before 1619, more than John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*, written about 1634, does from his *Broken Heart*, written about 1633. Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* imitated *Edward the Second* in an attempt to revive the Chronicle Pageants, and its Prologue repudiated the "unnecessary mirth" of such Histories as *King Henry the Fourth*. *King Henry the Eighth* had the same model and aim, and its Prologue repudiated Shakespeare's fool and fight and clatter of targets. I do not think that Shakespeare would have turned to denounce



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his own methods or to imitate Marlowe again as he had done when he wrote the second part of *King Richard the Second*; but two younger writers might have done this (as Ford afterwards did) when they attempted to show how a Chronicle Pageant ought to be written.

Some students have argued that the popular speeches in *King Henry the Eighth*, for instance, Wolsey's good-bye to Cromwell in the third Act, are too admirable to have been written by Fletcher. Even if we were prepared to admit that Fletcher did not attain this level or pass it at other times this would not prove that he did not soar to it once, and I do not believe that Shakespeare would have seen any reason for copying him in 1613. It seems plain that such verses as

And, when I am forgotten, as I shall be . . .  
Say, Wolsey, that once trod the ways of glory,  
And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour  
Found thee a way, out of his wreck, to rise in;  
A sure and safe one, though thy master missed it. . . .  
Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition,

or those in Wolsey's soliloquy,

Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,  
This many summers in a sea of glory,

were written by the poet who wrote in *Valentinian*,

Call in your lady-bawds and gilded pandars,  
And let them triumph too and sing to Cæsar,

and in *Bonduca*

See that huge battle moving from the mountains.

This lilting rhythm is like the Sapphics of Horace, such as,

Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus,

and Fletcher may have learnt it from him. Shakespeare's different mind could not have liked the accurate composure of Horace, and besides, the odds are that he knew little about him, for his knowledge of Latin Poetry seems to have been limited to a schoolboy's acquaintance with Ovid and Mantuanus and Virgil. And Fletcher's favourite lilt would have been alien



## KING HENRY THE EIGHTH

to him even in his lyrical days and repellent when his Verse had acquired a solemn maturity.

Most of this Play is written with Massinger's contented monotony, and his apparent share in the task suggests another possible reason for the acceptance of the Catholic story, since he seems to have been a Catholic during most of his life. Mr. Arthur Symons, for instance, writes in his *Philip Massinger*, printed in the Mermaid Series, "It is conjectured by Gifford that Massinger, during his residence in the University, had 'exchanged the Religion of his father for one at that time the object of terror, persecution and hatred.' . . . In support of this hypothesis, Gifford points particularly to the *Virgin Martyr*, *The Renegado* and *The Maid of Honour*. I cannot think the evidence of these Plays conclusive, but such as it is, it certainly goes a long way in favour of the supposition." He adds that the Catholic religion would have attracted a man of Massinger's temperament, "and he would certainly have every opportunity of association with it in a University of such Catholic and Conservative principles as Oxford." This seems supported by the little we know of Massinger's life, for instance, by the fact that he was forsaken by his first patron, the third Earl of Pembroke (of whom Clarendon wrote that he was "a great lover of his Country and of the Religion and Justice which he believed could only support it, and his friendships were only with men of these principles") and by the fact that Queen Henrietta Maria showed him a particular favour.

It seems to me that if Heminge and Condell had not printed this Play as Shakespeare's, we could conclude that Massinger wrote the Catholic Scenes about 1613 and that Fletcher retouched them with his lyrical eloquence and added the contradictory Act to suit the mood of that time. This would not be disproved by its structure since that was based on Marlowe's *Edward the Second*. And this Play's resemblance to *King Richard the Second* may be due to the fact that (like that early Pageant) it echoes *Edward the Second*, for instance, in Wolsey's farewell, for its first verses,

Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear  
In all my miseries; but thou hast forced me,  
Out of thy honest truth to play the woman

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seem derived from King Edward's parting from Leicester,

Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me,  
Thy speeches long ago had eased my sorrows,  
For kind and loving hast thou always been.

It seems to me that Heminge and Condell's inclusion of this Play in the Folio of 1623 can only be explained by inferring that Shakespeare had written a form of it which was rewritten afterwards by Fletcher and Massinger. In that case this Play should be ascribed to Fletcher and Massinger in the same way as, for instance, *King Henry the Sixth* is given to Shakespeare. If he called his sketch of this Pageant *All Is True*, he may have meant this to show that he was turning from Plays which could be fitly named *As You Like It*. He may have intended his last Pageant to be his first mature Tragedy. Perhaps he could have said as Fletcher did in the Prologue,

I come no more to make you laugh : things now  
That bear a weighty and a serious brow,  
Sad, high and working, full of state and woe,  
Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow,  
We now present.

## THE TRAGEDIES

### I

SHAKESPEARE lived in passionate times, and they grew darker as he came to maturity. During those years he watched the fantastic boys whom he had admired in his Youth grow to heroic men and struggle and fall and he saw Queen Elizabeth yield to Old Age at last and die broken-hearted.

During the years between 1593 and 1603 the third Earl of Southampton, for instance, triumphed at Court and cast the Royal favour away for Elizabeth Vernon and became linked in passionate friendship with her cousin, the second Earl of Essex, fought under him at the capture of Cadiz in 1596, sailed with him as a Vice-Admiral in command of a Ship-Royal, *The Garland*, in 1597 and was knighted by him when Villa Franca was taken "ere he could dry the sweat from his brows or put his sword in his scabbard" (according to Markham) and went with him to more fighting in Ireland in 1599, returned with him to help his fatal Revolt, rode with him to call London to arms in 1601 and was sentenced to death for this in the Guildhall and was kept in the Tower till Queen Elizabeth died. The effeminate boy to whom Shakespeare had dedicated his Poems of Love had changed to the reckless soldier who stood on the leads of Essex House, saying: "Let his Lordship do his pleasure. If he blow us up, we shall be the nearer Heaven. We purpose not to yield without hostages, for we have made our choice rather to die like men with swords in our hands."

There is no reason to doubt that one of Shakespeare's feigned Tragedies, *King Richard the Second*, was set in the true one of the Essex Revolt as the Murder Play was in *Hamlet*. Bacon recorded in his *Account of the Arraignment of Merrick*, one of the leaders of that Revolt: "And farther to prove him privy to the Plot . . . it was given in evidence that the afternoon before the Rebellion, Merrick, with a great company of others that afterwards were all in the action, had procured to be played before them the Play of deposing

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

King Richard the Second. Neither was it casual, but a Play bespoken by Merrick. And not so only, but when he was told by one of the Players that the Play was old, and that they should have loss in playing it because few would come to it, there were forty Shillings extraordinary given to play it, and so thereupon played it was. So earnest he was to satisfy his eyes with the sight of that Tragedy, which he thought soon after his Lordship should bring from the Stage to the State, but that God turned it upon their heads." Camden, too, wrote in his *Annals* that the Play was old, "Merrick was accused that he had with money procured an old out-worn Play of the tragical deposing of King Richard the Second to be acted on the public Stage before his companions." *King Richard the Second* would have been old in 1601 and no longer attractive, for the fashion had changed. The King's deposition was omitted from it when it was printed in 1597. Though the Queen did not resemble the pathetic King drawn in the second part of that History she was accused of yielding to favourites, and the Essex Revolt was a plot to dethrone her and put her under restraint on the ground of senile decay. This was why in her last days (according to Sir John Harington in *Nugæ Antiquæ*, printed in 1769) she said, "I know I am not mad: you must not think to make Queen Jane of me," remembering how Queen Joanna of Castile was supplanted on the ground of Insanity. It seems certain that she described Shakespeare's Play when she saw William Lambarde's *Pandecta Rotulorum* at Greenwich in 1601. "I am Richard the Second: know ye not that?" she said (according to Lambarde); and when he replied, referring to Essex, "Such a wicked imagination was determined and attempted by a most unkind gentleman, the most adorned creature that ever your Majesty made," she rejoined, "He that forgets God will also forget his benefactor. The Tragedy was played forty times in open streets and houses."

If Shakespeare took any part in *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second* when it was performed on that February afternoon in the Globe, before Southampton and Rutland and hundreds of gentlemen who had sworn to rebel with them, he was like one of the Players in *Hamlet*. But there was no mention of his name in the Records.



## THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

Another true 'Tragedy in which he must have taken a particular interest was the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. If he was living then in Stratford-on-Avon he was in the midst of that Plot. Clopton House, which Sir Everard Digby hired for it, was near Stratford, and so was Norbrook, the moated grange where John Grant, another of the Conspirators, lived, and the fugitives rode through Stratford to Huddington, still hoping to raise the Standard of Rebellion in Warwickshire.

There were about a dozen Conspirators in the beginning of the Gunpowder Plot, all of them gentlemen except Catesby's servant, Bates, nearly all of them kinsmen or connected by marriage and linked with Warwickshire, and all, except perhaps Bates, men who (like several of the prominent Jesuits, Fathers Campion and Parsons and Garnet, for instance) had been Protestants and had been reconciled to the Catholic Church. They may have been driven by the zeal of new converts, but most of them had been mainly remarkable as reckless adventurers. A painting by Van den Passe called "*Concilium Septem Nobilium Anglorum Conjurantium*" shows all the first leaders as men with twisted moustaches and short beards and long hair and rich clothes and high steeple-crowned hats.

Two at least of the Gunpowder Plotters, Catesby and Tresham, had ridden in the Essex Revolt with many other Catholics. Cecil had taunted Essex himself with being a Catholic, saying, "Your Religion appears by Blunt, Davis and Tresham, your chiefest counsellors for the present, and by promising Toleration hereafter." But this was probably false, though the Earl's wife (who was Walsingham's daughter and Philip Sidney's widow) became a Catholic afterwards, like his sister Penelope, who had been Sidney's first love and the Stella of the *Astrophel Poems*. Bacon wrote of him in his *Declaration of the Treasons of Robert, Earl of Essex*: "knowing there were no such strong and drawing cards of popularity as Religion, he had not neglected, both at this time and long time before, in a profane policy to serve his turn, for his own greatness, of both sorts of factions, both of Catholics and Puritans." And, like the Essex Revolt, the Gunpowder Plot was a crazy blow by desperate gentlemen.

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Shakespeare saw these things, not as we see them deliberately obscured by the Records, but enacted around him. It may be that he thought of such men as Catesby, who after leading wild lives sacrificed all, when he wrote in his *Sonnets*,

To this I witness call the fools of time,  
Which die for goodness who have lived for crime.

When he wrote his feigned Tragedies he must have remembered the real ones in which they were set. Harington wrote of Essex in his *Nugæ Antiquæ*: "My Lord of Essex shifteth from sorrow and repentance to rage and rebellion so suddenly as well proveth him devoid of good reason as right mind. . . . The Queen well knoweth how to humble his haughty spirit: his haughty spirit knoweth not how to yield; and the man's soul seemeth tossed to and fro like the waves of a troubled sea." In all Shakespeare's last Tragedies haughty spirits were broken and souls were tossed to and fro.

In the Plays printed as Tragedies by Heminge and Condell, except the two Juvenile Poems *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet* and the unfinished Tragi-comedy *Cymbeline*, heroic hearts fall. Excessive strength is the theme of each of these Tragedies. Each of them dealt with a man of whom it might be said in the words of the twenty-third Sonnet that he was like

Some fierce thing, replete with too much rage,  
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart.

Even in *Julius Cæsar*, which is apart from all the rest of these Tragedies and links them with the Chronicle Pageant, Cæsar's strength is excessive and dooms him in the everyday World. Macbeth is overborne by ambition and distracted by the sight of the Weird Sisters and the sudden temptation linked with their prophecy. Hamlet is too great for his time, and he is half crazed by his beloved father's appeal and the agony of condemning his mother. King Lear is too great to be a King, and he turns against his daughter Cordelia because he loves her too well. For the same reason Othello, who is too great to live with Venetians, kills Desdemona. Antony is strong enough to conquer the World

## THE THEME OF THE TRAGEDIES

and then to cast it away and count it well lost. Coriolanus and Timon are doomed to misery because they are too great. In all these Plays the crows peck the eagles. And we can say of each of the victims as Cassius said of Cæsar,

He doth bestride the narrow World  
Like a Colossus.

There is no weakness in any of them except the excessive strength that weakened his heart. All of them are on the brink of Insanity, even Cæsar, for he has the Falling Sickness (like Othello) and yields to an impossible dream. And this Insanity is the dotage of strength.

In the Tragedies ascribed now to Lucius Annæus Seneca Madness was inspired by the Gods or by ghosts who were in search of revenge. It resembled Possession by Evil Spirits and made its victims subordinate: Juno rules Hercules in the *Hercules Furens*. Shakespeare copied this in three of these Tragedies, changing the stories in an attempt to show Brutus, Macbeth and Hamlet dominated by Spirits.

Plutarch did not assert that Cæsar's ghost came to Brutus. The Life of Julius Cæsar in North's version of Plutarch says: "Above all, the ghost that appeared unto Brutus showed plainly that the Gods were offended with the murder of Cæsar. . . . He saw a horrible vision of a man of a wonderful greatness and dreadful look which at the first made him marvellously afraid. But when he saw that it did him no hurt but stood by his bedside and said nothing, at length he asked it what it was. The image answered him, 'I am thy Ill Angel, Brutus, and thou shalt see me by the City of Phillipæ.' Then Brutus replied again and said, 'Well, I shall see thee then.'" And the same story is told in the Life of Brutus. In *Julius Cæsar* Brutus sees the same Evil Spirit though the Stage-direction says, "Enter the Ghost of Cæsar." But in the next Act he exclaims,

O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!  
Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords  
In our own proper entrails,

and he says to Volumnius,



## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

The ghost of Cæsar hath appeared to me  
Two several times by night.

Plutarch's Ill Angel was transformed to resemble the ghost seen in Seneca's *Troades*,

Emicuit ingens umbra Thessalici ducis.

Antony had prophesied this in the Third Act,

And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for Revenge,  
With Ate by his side, come hot from Hell,  
Shall in these confines with a Monarch's voice  
Cry "Havoc" and let slip the dogs of war.

In the same way though Shakespeare found the Weird Sisters in Holinshed's version of the tale of Macbeth he gave them more prominence (though probably less than is held now by the Witches) and he added the ghost of Banquo and changed the story of Hamlet told by Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest, introducing a spectre which was intended to be as dominant as the ghost of Achilles.

In the rest of the Tragedies, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*, there is no echo of the Senecan Madness. Edmund says in *King Lear*: "This is the excellent foppery of the World, that when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeit of our own behaviour—we make guilty of our disasters the Sun, the Moon and the Stars, as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on." In these Tragedies Seneca's "divine thrusting on" is replaced by the passions in the hearts of the victims.

This change in the Tragedies seems one of the signs that the first three should be dated the first. I think that when Shakespeare devoted himself to Tragical work he turned to Seneca's Tragedies, guided perhaps by the fact that Ben Jonson set that example. Those Tragedies were not meant for the Stage: they were frames for rhetorical and long recitations. Their influence checked the action of *Hamlet* while the hero declaimed the platitudes of a



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borrowed philosophy; but it fades from these Tragedies as if Shakespeare outgrew his master and saw that philosophical arguments can only impede a story of Passion and that victims dominated by ghosts must be subordinate. He may have found too that Cæsar's ghost had little effect, since Brutus was Stoical enough to defy it, and that Banquo's had less, since Macbeth was already doomed when it came, and that Hamlet persisted in disobeying his father's.

In these Tragedies all the suffering men are old or have begun to be elderly, except Brutus whose age could not be changed and Hamlet who could not have been made older without leaving the King's and Queen's reciprocal love senile. Macbeth's way of life

Is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf,

and Othello is declined into the vale of years and Antony's hair is grey. The love in these last Tragedies is a comradeship closer because the lovers are clinging in the shadow of Death, and it is no longer the chief thing in the story, except in *Antony and Cleopatra*, but blended with other passions as strong in elderly people.

Harington wrote in a letter in his *Nugæ Antiquæ* that when the old Queen had listened to some fanciful verses in her last year she said, "When thou dost feel creeping Time at thy gate, these fooleries will please thee less. I am past my relish for such matters." And it may be that Shakespeare had lost his relish for fooleries. Old Age began soon in those days: Cardinal Wolsey, who had been called the old Cardinal for several years, died aged fifty-four; King Henry the Eighth, the old King, died aged fifty-eight; old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster, died aged about sixty, and Kent in *King Lear* was described as an ancient ruffian when he was aged forty-eight. Besides, Shakespeare was writing for Players who had ceased to be young; Burbage, for instance, could succeed as Othello, but Romeo was out of his reach.

We do not know when *Julius Cæsar* was written, and there is no sign that it was printed before 1623. But John Weever wrote in *The Mirror of Martyrs*, printed in 1601,

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The many-headed multitude was drawn  
By Brutus' speech that Cæsar was ambitious :  
When eloquent Mark Antony had shown  
His virtues, who but Brutus then was vicious ?

Since Weever's Poem was a protest against Shakespeare's treatment of Oldcastle in *King Henry the Fourth*, and since we have no reason to think that any other English dramatist wrote a contest in eloquence between Brutus and Antony, we can infer that a form of *Julius Cæsar* was known in 1601. In the next year Henslowe employed Drayton and others to write a Play called *Cæsar's Fall*, but if it was ever written it has been lost. This task may be a sign that Henslowe's rivals had recently found a Play about Cæsar profitable. It was the custom to mirror current affairs, as when Ben Jonson used Simon Forman's fame in *The Alchemist* and mentioned him in *The Devil is an Ass* and linked *Catiline* with the Gunpowder Plot, making, for instance, Cicero say,

I told too, in the Senate, that their purpose  
Was on the Fifth (the Kalends of November)  
To have slaughtered this whole order.

The Players may well have been content to produce Plays about Cæsar at a time when so many Conspirators in England and France had sought the renown of Tyrannicide; but even if we could be sure that *Julius Cæsar* was produced at this time this would not prove that Shakespeare had not dealt with this subject when he was young.

The theme had been popular long before this not only in France and Italy but also in England. For instance, *Machyn's Diary* seems to show that a Play called *Julius Cæsar* was acted at Court in 1562, and *The Second and Third Blast of Retreat from Theatres*, printed in 1580, said, "And if they write of histories that are known, as the Life of Pompey, the martial affairs of Cæsar and other worthies, they give them a new face to turn them like counterfeits to show themselves on the Stage," and a Play called *The Tragedy of Cæsar and Pompey* was mentioned in Gosson's *Plays Confuted in Four Actions* in 1581.

Sir Sidney Lee writes of this Play that "the metrical

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features hover between early regularity and late irregularity," and says that this is one of the traits which "suggest a date of composition at the midmost point of the dramatist's career," the Autumn of 1600. But since I do not believe that any author ever wrote in his early way and his later one at the same time I take this as showing that in this Play, as we have it, Shakespeare rewrote earlier work.

It may be that Shakespeare wrote a short Play dealing with Cæsar's Fall and another dealing with the Revenge of Cæsar's Ghost when he was beginning and connected them about 1594 and rewrote them in a deliberate imitation of Seneca's rhetorical contests when he turned to his Tragedies about 1600. These could be called the *First and Second Parts of Julius Cæsar*, and may have been still acted separately, for they are balanced and the chief Scene in each is a rhetorical contest.

The Scene which was most admired in those days is the dialogue between Brutus and Cassius in the fourth Act. Leonard Digges, for instance, wrote in his verses printed in Benson's edition of Shakespeare's Poems in 1640 :

Impossible with some new strain to outdo  
Passions of Juliet and her Romeo,  
Or till I hear a Scene more nobly take  
Than when thy half-sword parleying Romans spake. . . .  
So I have seen when Cæsar would appear,  
And on the Stage at half-sword parley were  
Brutus and Cassius, O, how the audience  
Were ravished ! with what wonder went they thence !

And when this Tragedy is seen on the Stage its climax is not the killing of Cæsar but Antony's triumph when he overcomes Brutus in eloquence.

That contest was not recorded by Plutarch. In the Life of Julius Cæsar he mentioned only Brutus' speech : "The next morning, Brutus and his confederates came into the market-place to speak unto the people, who gave them such audience that it seemed they neither greatly approved nor allowed the fact, for by their great silence they showed that they were sorry for Cæsar's death, and also that they

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did reverence Brutus." In the Life of Marcus Antonius he only mentioned his speech: "And therefore when Cæsar's body was brought to the place where it should be buried, he made a funeral oration in commendation of Cæsar, in accordance with the ancient custom of praising noble men at their funerals. . . . In fine, to conclude the oration, he unfolded before the whole assembly the bloody garments of the dead, thrust through in many places with their swords, and called them malefactors, cruel and cursed murderers. With these words he put the people into such a fury that they presently took Cæsar's body and burnt it in the market-place." And in the Life of Marcus Brutus the two speeches made at different times are briefly recorded.

Shakespeare may have founded Antony's speech on those given in these Lives and (as Sir Israel Gollancz has suggested) he may have used Hamblet's Oration in the sixth chapter of Belleforest's *History of Hamblet* when he wished to provide Brutus with eloquence.

Mr. Bradley says in his *Shakesperean Tragedy*, "But for the name given to this Play, presumably to attract the public, no careful reader would hesitate to call Brutus the hero." But this belief (which seems to have been first suggested by Schlegel) is disproved by the fact that the sympathy of the men of that time could not have been attracted by Brutus. Even Schlegel admitted that Cassius was drawn superior to Brutus in discernment and strength of will, and it is plain that Mark Antony was intended to win the audience in the same way as he won the crowd in the Forum. Schlegel and his followers saw a Hamlet in Brutus and this won their hearts, but Shakespeare was not writing for them.

There are two pictures of Brutus to be seen in this Play. The first was a vain dupe, a sham Stoic, and a mouther of platitudes, who was meant to excite the hatred of the audience and leave their sympathy with Cæsar unchecked. For instance, in the third Scene of the fourth Act Brutus asserts that he has no news of his wife and Messala says,

Then like a Roman bear the truth I tell :  
For certain she is dead, and by strange manner.

Brutus replies,



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Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala :  
With meditating that she must die once  
I have the patience to endure it now.

Messala says,

Even so great men great losses should endure,  
and Cassius adds,

I have as much of art in this as you,  
But yet my nature would not bear it so.

Then Brutus puts the matter out of his mind, saying,

Well, to our work alive. What do you think  
Of marching to Philippi presently ?

His attitude here is an affectation of Stoicism, which Cassius supports, for they had both known of Portia's death before Messala arrived.

The second Brutus is noble : even Antony says of him at the end of the Play,

This was the noblest Roman of them all :  
All the conspirators, save only he,  
Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar ;  
He only, in a general honest thought  
And common good to all, made one of them.

In saying this Antony undoes his own work in the Forum, for he justifies Brutus.

It may be that when Shakespeare wrote the first forms of this Roman Pageant he followed the traditional view told, for instance, in Chaucer's *Monk's Tale* :

To Rome again repaireth Julius,  
With his triumphe laurial full high,  
But on a time Brutus and Cassius,  
That ever had to his estate envy,  
Full privily hath made conspiracy  
Against this Julius in subtle wise,  
And cast the place in which he should die  
With daggers bright, as I shall you devise,

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This Julius to the Capitol went  
Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,  
And in the Capitol anon him hent  
This false Brutus and his other foon.

This would explain why the Senate-house is confused with the Capitol in this Play, as we have it, as it was in the one mentioned in *Hamlet* as performed at the University long ago when Polonius was young. Chaucer's sympathy was all given to Cæsar, as Suffolk's was when he said in the *Second Part of King Henry the Sixth* :

Great men oft die by vile Bezonians ;  
A Roman sworder and banditto slave  
Murdered sweet Tully ; Brutus' bastard hand  
Stabbed Julius Cæsar.

and as the Queen's was when she said in the *Third Part* of that Pageant :

O traitors ! murderers !  
They, that stabbed Cæsar, shed no blood at all,  
Did not offend nor were not worthy blame  
If this foul deed were by to equal it.

In this Play, as we have it, Brutus' rebellion is justified, even by Antony, because Cæsar had ended as a tyrant in dotage. And if we could be sure that this form was written in 1601, in the days when "the tyrant's reign" was still in the list of the afflictions of Life cited by Hamlet, we could infer that it extenuated the Essex Revolt. Essex was in Brutus' place, striking against the old Queen who had overwhelmed him with benefits and alleging her tyrannous dotage as his only excuse. Marullus' speech in the first Act, beginning "Wherefore rejoice ?" may be a sign that this Play was written after Essex had failed. The men who heard it may have remembered the recent Prologue in *King Henry the Fifth* :

The Mayor and all his brethren in best sort,  
Like to the Senators of the antique Rome,  
With the Plebeians swarming at their heels,  
Go forth and fetch their conquering Cæsar in.

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If they remembered this and the fact that this Company of Players had risked and incurred the Queen's displeasure by acting *King Richard the Second* for the Essex Conspirators, they may well have thought of their former favourite, Essex, who was doomed by trusting their love, when they heard Marullus say :

O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,  
Knew you not Pompey ? Many a time and oft  
Have you climbed up to walls and battlements,  
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney tops,  
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat  
The livelong day with patient expectation  
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome : . . .  
And do you now strew flowers in his way  
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood ?  
Be gone !  
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,  
Pray to the Gods to intermit the plague  
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

In this Play the ingratitude of Brutus is partly exonerated because it is surpassed by the ingratitude of the Romans to Pompey and then to Cæsar and then to Brutus himself when he had slain his benefactor for them. Essex had struck because he had trusted the Londoners, but when he rode up the Strand and Fleet Street to Ludgate and then to Cheapside, there was nobody to answer his call. Bacon wrote in his *Account of The Treasons* : " There was not in so populous a city one man from the chiefest citizen to the meanest artificer or prentice that armed with him ; so as being extremely appalled, as divers that happened to see him there might visibly perceive in his face and countenance, and almost molten with sweat, though without any cause of bodily labour, but only by the perplexity and horror of his mind, he came to Smith's house the Sheriff."

This probable connexion between *Julius Cæsar* and the Essex Revolt is, I think, one of the examples that prove that if we wish to understand Shakespeare's Plays and to guess when they were written we must remember the historical facts. The theatres were centres of gossip, and the

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Corporation of London stated in 1597 that they were the ordinary places for masterless men and contrivers of Treason. And most of the Plotters of those days were well known to all in the little City of London. For instance, young Chidiock Tichborne, who joined the Babington Plot of 1586 (as he confessed) "for the love of Antony Babington," said as he stood under the Gallows, "Before this thing chanced we lived together in most flourishing estate. Of whom went report in the Strand, Fleet Street and elsewhere in London but of Babington and Tichborne?" And Babington haunted the theatres, according to a Ballad called *Antony Babington's Complaint*,

To be a good lawyer my mind would not frame,  
I addicted was so to pleasure and given so to game,  
But to the Theatre and Curtain would often resort,  
Where I met companions fitting my disport.

The Queen was glorious and loved when Shakespeare was young, and if he wrote juvenile forms of *Julius Cæsar* when the Babington Plot was recent it would have been a natural thing to follow Chaucer in making Brutus detestable. But when she beheaded Essex she lost the love of the Londoners: though they had not helped him they mourned for him, and after this they were silent when they saw her go by. She mourned for him too, though when the news of his death was brought to her while she played the Spinnet she continued playing to show how little she cared, for in her last days when she was haunted by visions and told one of her ladies that she saw her own body "exceedingly lean and fearful in a light of fire," one of her courtiers recorded of her: "She sleepeth not by day, as she used; neither taketh she rest by night: her delight is to sit in the dark and (sometimes with shedding tears) to bewail Essex." If Shakespeare wrote this Play, as we have it, when Essex was mourned even by the Queen it would have been natural to extenuate the conduct of Brutus. Besides, he may have remembered how he had admired Southampton when they were young and how Essex had befriended the Players.

When in the third Act he made Antony say that Cæsar fell



## JULIUS CÆSAR

Even at the base of Pompey's statue,  
Which all the while ran blood

he took this from the words in the Life of Julius Cæsar in which North misinterpreted or tried to improve Amyot's version, "he was driven, either casually, or purposely by the counsel of the Conspirators, against the base whereupon Pompey's image stood, which ran all of a gore blood till he was slain." But this and the speech about Pompey in the first Act may be signs that the two parts of this Play were intended to be Scenes of a Roman Chronicle Pageant beginning with the favourite theme of Cæsar and Pompey, in which Cleopatra might have ensnared Cæsar when she was young and Antony when she was wrinkled with time. Henslowe's Diary proves that a Play called *Cæsar and Pompey* was performed by the Admiral's Men in 1594 and one called the *Second Part of Cæsar* in 1595, and since we know that the Chamberlain's Servants were acting with the Admiral's Men at Newington Butts in 1594 it is possible that these Plays were by Shakespeare. The Scene in the fifth Act when Brutus ran on his sword may have suggested the greater one when Antony copied him.

The two pictures of Brutus and the different manners seem signs that this Play was founded on an earlier version, and this, I think, would be proved if we could be sure that it was planned as a Tragedy, for otherwise we would have to conclude that when he set out to write a *Tragedy of Julius Cæsar* he wrote one in which Cæsar was drawn without sympathy and killed incidentally and overshadowed by an eloquent follower and an eloquent foe. But this proof is lost if (as I think) this Play is a rhetorical Pageant in two Scenes or Parts, for in that case it would have been named in the same way as *King Henry the Fourth* was.

Mr. Dowden says of this Play in his *Shakespeare Primer*, "There is no tempestuousness of passion, and no artistic mystery." This separates it from the rest of the Tragedies. Most of the Characters are drawn without sympathy, and this may be one of the signs that this Play, as we have it, was written at about the same time as a version of *Troilus and Cressida*. The tepidity of the picture of Cæsar may be

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partly due to the fact that Plutarch wrote of Cæsar with caution because the subject was dangerous. After comparing him with Alexander he said: "You look here, Reader, to see to which of the two I should give precedency; but since the World hath been too little for the one and the other, I should go too far if I plainly spake what I thought." And this Play may have been weakened also because Shakespeare founded it on three different Lives in Plutarch instead of only using one as in *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. But it seems to me that the tepidity and weakness are also signs that Shakespeare wrote this Play first when he was too young to do justice to its theme and rewrote it when he was writing still with dexterous Stage-craft, instead of emotion, and externally and feeling his way to his own Tragical method.

A version of *Hamlet* would have been timely too when Essex had shown Hamlet's hesitation and frenzy. It is a curious coincidence that Essex had been in Hamlet's place in another way if there was any truth in the story that Leicester, his mother's second husband, poisoned her first one, the first Earl of Essex. Without concluding that Shakespeare deliberately drew Essex as Brutus and Hamlet we may imagine that he had him in mind when he dealt with characters whose fate was like his. This would help to explain the connection between Brutus and Hamlet which is commonly recognized. That connection would be further explained if Shakespeare's attempt to turn the *Pageant of Julius Cæsar* into *The Tragedy of Brutus* convinced him that it was impossible to make Brutus a hero and led him to write a version of *Hamlet* in which another student of Philosophy grappled vainly with the everyday World. That version of *Hamlet* may have been the one represented in the Quarto of 1603. If that form was rewritten in 1603 or 1604 to please Queen Anne of Denmark and her brother Duke Ulric, who was in England during part of those years, as it was printed in the Quarto of 1604, and if a form of *Macbeth* had been written meanwhile in 1603 in honour of King James' Accession, this would explain why Heminge and Condell printed *Hamlet* after *Macbeth*. If Shakespeare had needed a motto for *Hamlet* he could have found one in Brutus' words,

## MACBETH

Between the acting of a dreadful thing  
And the first motion, all the interim is  
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream.

*Macbeth* does not seem to have been printed before the Folio of 1623, and so we cannot be certain when Shakespeare's work on it ended. It is much shorter than the rest of the Tragedies, and this supports the impression that an opening Act was obliterated like the beginning of *The Rape of Lucrece*.

There are two Macbeths here, as in other Plays there are two Othellos, two Shylocks, two Angelos and several Hamlets. The first Macbeth is the one who says at the end of the fourth Scene of the first Act :

The Prince of Cumberland ! that is a step  
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,  
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires ;  
Let not light see my black and deep desires :  
The eye wink at the hand ; yet let that be  
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

The second Macbeth is described by his wife immediately afterwards in the fifth Scene :

Yet do I fear thy nature ;  
It is too full of the milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way : thou wouldst be great ;  
Art not without ambition, but without  
The illness should attend it : what thou wouldst highly  
That wouldst thou holily ; wouldst not play false,  
And yet wouldst wrongly win.

The first Macbeth is akin to Aaron the Moor in *Titus Andronicus* and the second to Hamlet, and these passages are as widely apart, one is juvenile and the other mature.

There are two Lady Macbeths also. One is akin to Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* : this is the one of whom Malcolm is thinking at the end when he says,

Producing forth the cruel ministers  
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen.

The other is the woman who says, " All the perfumes of Arabia

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will not sweeten this little hand." She does not want the Crown for herself (as in Holinshed's version)—she only thinks of her husband: she overcomes the weakness which holds him from the attempt he had suggested to her, but she only does this because she wishes him to be great. Though she still says in the first Act,

Come, thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,

she has no part in the bloodshed, except when she smears the servants with blood, and her own nature shrinks from it: she says,

Come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full  
Of direst cruelty!

like Juno, who in the *Hercules Furens* said,

Me, me, Sorores, mente dejectam mea  
Versate primam, facere si quicquam apparo  
Dignam noverca.

The first Lady Macbeth was like one of Chaucer's wicked elderly Queens,

O Sultanness, root of Iniquity,  
Virago thou!

The second was one of the women stronger than men who lived in those times; she might have been copied from the popular notion of the Duchess of Northumberland of King Edward the Sixth's reign who was believed to have forced her wavering husband to execute Somerset and to strike for the Throne. The first could never have known the second's unavailing remorse.

This Tragedy has a radical weakness: Macbeth as he is drawn in it now could no more have murdered his benefactor asleep and trusting to him than his wife could have smeared the sleeping servants with blood. There is a similar defect in its manner: shambling Blank Verses and passages of



## MACBETH

juvenile fustian survive from an early form of the Play, staining its beauty.

Mr. Andrew Lang, in his *Social History of England in the Seventeenth Century*, said in a note on the passage in Kemp's *Nine Days' Wonder* about "the penny poet whose first making was a miserable stolen story of Mac Doel—or Mac-Dobeth or Mac-Somewhat," "it may not be beyond the reach of conjecture that Shakespeare's Company about 1600 had put a *Macbeth* on the Stage as a feeler in James's interest; for Kemp's Shake-rags is much in the style of Greene's Shake-scene." But if this passage can be taken as proving anything of the kind it would show that Shakespeare had borrowed or had stolen this theme when he was beginning to write. There may have been an older Play on this subject; but in any case Holinshed's Chronicle, the book which Shakespeare used, was available when he was beginning.

Mr. Saintsbury says in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*: "Those who (if there be any such) believe that Shakespeare wrote the whole of *Macbeth* and that he wrote it about 1605, must have curious standards of criticism. To believe that he wrote the whole of it is quite easy—indeed, the present writer has little or no doubt on the matter; but the belief is only possible on the supposition that it was written at rather different times."

I think that Shakespeare worked on this Play three times at least, first in the early days when he wrote *Titus Andronicus* and again when he reshaped that crude form in honour of King James' Accession and again about 1610, and that some one changed it later by shortening it and turning the Weird Sisters to Witches.

Some students who think that this Play was written about 1605 support that opinion by finding in the Porter's words, "here's an equivocator . . . who committed treason enough for God's sake"—an allusion to Father Henry Garnet's defence. But the theory of Equivocation was old: the early Greek Fathers of the Church had upheld it and Saint Augustine had dissented from them. It had been often debated, for instance at Father William Weston's trial in 1587, and Father Robert Southwell's in 1595, and Father John Gerard's examination in 1597. It held that a man might be justified

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in deceiving, as by an evasion or an ambiguous answer, when some greater mischief would be wrought by the truth. Father Weston recorded in his *Account of His Life*: "To all these interrogations I replied with brevity and ease, confessing all such things as might be revealed without injury to others, denying those which they had no right to press on me, and which I could not without sin betray to them." And Father Garnet said at his trial: "As I say it is never lawful to equivocate in matters of Faith, so also in matters of human conversation it may not be used promiscuously or at our pleasure, as in matters of contract, or matters of testimony, or before a competent Judge, or to the prejudice of any third person, in which case we judge it altogether unlawful." In his defence he attempted to explain the distinctions of Scholastic Philosophy which were meant to decide whether there were times when the truth could be hidden without the malice of lying.

There are scores of equivocations in Shakespeare's Plays; as in *Macbeth* when Macduff says,

The tyrant has not battered at their peace?

and Ross answers,

No, they were well at peace when I did leave them,  
and when the Apparitions deceived Macbeth, as he recognized at the end when he said,

And be those juggling friends no more believed  
That palter with us in a double sense,

and there are virtuous lies, as when in *Othello* Desdemona answers Emilia's question, "Who hath done this deed?" by saying, "Nobody, I myself."

Even if we could conclude that the Porter's speech had any connection with the Gunpowder Plot this would not prove that *Macbeth* was first written in 1606, since it could have been added in a revision about that time, which may have caused the reference in *The Puritan, or the Widow of Watling Street*, printed in 1607, "instead of a Jester, we'll have a fellow in a white sheet sit at the upper end of the table."

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Coleridge rejected the Porter's speech because he disliked it. He said in his *Notes on Some Other Plays*: "This low soliloquy of the Porter and his few speeches afterwards, I believe to have been written for the mob by some other hand, perhaps with Shakespeare's consent; and finding it take, he, with the remaining ink of a pen otherwise employed, just interpolated the words 'I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire.'" But this was one of Coleridge's lapses from a rational criticism. This phrase is certainly Shakespeare's—he wrote in *Hamlet* of "the primrose path of dalliance," and in *All's Well that Ends Well* of "the flowery way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire"—but so is all the rest of the speech. Lady Macbeth remembers the knocking when she walks in her sleep; she says, "To bed, to bed, there is knocking at the gate," in the same way as she recalls her words of Macbeth,

And that which rather thou dost fear to do  
Than wishest should be undone

and his words

If 'twere done when 'tis done,

when she says "What's done cannot be undone; to bed, to bed." It may be that one of her sayings in this scene, "Hell is murky," is a similar echo, and that he said in the third Act,

Light thickens, and the crow  
Makes wing to the murky wood,

and not to "the rooky wood." And it may be that the Porter appeared in the first form of this Tragedy, for the Porter of Hell was one of the Characters of the Mystery Plays, and these were more likely to be in Shakespeare's mind in his Youth than in the days when they were things of the Past.

King James showed Shakespeare's Company favour (perhaps partly because they had acted *King Richard the Second* for the Essex Conspirators), and gave them the title of the King's Servants or His Majesty's Servants in May, 1603, naming Shakespeare second among them. In November,



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1603, they were summoned to act at Wilton House while the King planned one of his Tragi-comedies there, the trick of bringing Markham and Cobham and Grey to the Block at Winchester and sparing their lives at the last moment. *Macbeth* was a Play suited to please him since he claimed to be descended from Banquo, and it may well have been performed for him then, for it would have been natural to pay such a compliment on an early occasion. This would support the Folio Order, but it cannot be proved, and it matters the less because we have evidence that one of the chief things in this Play was changed after 1610.

Simon Forman, the Wizard, wrote in the Book of Plays and Notes thereof in his Diary: "In Mackbeth at the Globe, 1610, the twentieth of April, Saturday, there was to be observed first how Mackbeth and Bancko, two noblemen of Scotland, riding through a wood, there stood before them three women Fairies or Nymphs." This agrees with Holinshed's statement: "suddenly in the midst of a land there met them three women in strange and ferly apparel, resembling creatures of an elder world, whom when they attentively beheld, wondering much at the sight, the first of them spake and said, 'All hail! Macbeth, Thane of Glamis' . . . the second of them said, 'Hail! Macbeth, Thane of Cawdor.' But the third said, 'All hail! Macbeth, that shalt hereafter be King of Scotland.' . . . This was reputed at the first some vain fantastical illusion by Macbeth and Banquo . . . but afterwards the common opinion was that these women were either the Weird Sisters, that is (as you would say) the Goddesses of Destiny, or else some Nymphs or Fairies, endued with knowledge of Prophecy by their Necromantical Science, because everything came to pass as they had spoken." Gawin Douglas had already translated the Latin *Parcæ* by "Weird Sisters," and he and Holinshed used "weird" as a noun meaning "doom," as it had done in its older English form "wirde," and the Anglo-Saxon one "wyrde."

Simon Forman was then earning his livelihood by practising Witchcraft as he had done for many years: one of the entries in his Diary reads: "This I made the Devil write with his own hands in Lambeth Fields, 1596." For three years before 1610 he had been busy weaving spells and making drugs at



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the bidding of the young Countess of Essex, the wife of the third Earl, to help her to win Robert Carr's love. In this year she grew desperate and employed him to make drugs which she could give to her husband. He would have shared the doom of the other Wizards or poisoners who were executed for dealing with her if he had not died before the Poison Plot was betrayed. The year after he saw *Macbeth* acted he died in fulfilment of one of his own prophecies while he was crossing the River, returning to his home at Lambeth. "Being in the middle of the Thames," Antony à Wood writes, "he presently fell down, and once said 'an impost' and so died, whereupon a most sad storm of wind immediately followed." Simon Forman knew all about Witches, and if he had seen three represented on the Stage in *Macbeth* he would not have called them "Fairies or Nymphs." So the entry in his Diary proves that in 1610 Shakespeare was still following Holinshed's version and making Macbeth and Banquo encounter the three Fates or three Nymphs or Fairies. Otherwise the chief Wizard in England would have watched the Stage-Witches in the same way as the Essex Conspirators saw *King Richard the Second*.

King James was also an expert in the matter of Witchcraft : he had proclaimed his belief in the Black Art in his *Demonology*, printed in 1599, and he repealed an old Statute (5 Eliz. c. 16) against "conjuraton, witchcraft and dealing with evil and wicked spirits, treasure-seeking or the intent to provoke any person to unlawful love" in the Twelfth Public Act of His First Parliament, early in 1604, re-enacting it with new penalties. There had been many charges of Witchcraft in Queen Elizabeth's Reign, for instance, the cases of the Witches of Saint Osees or Saint Osyths in 1582 and of the Witches of Warbois in 1589, but they increased rapidly because he supported them. In 1612 twenty women were arrested for Witchcraft in Lancashire and twelve of them hanged, according to Thomas Pott's *Wonderful Discovery of Witches in the County of Lancaster*, printed in 1613.

This increasing belief in Witchcraft helps to explain why some one changed the Weird Sisters to Witches in or after 1610. There are many signs of this change. Macbeth says to the Weird Sisters,

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In the name of truth,  
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed  
Which outwardly ye show ?

Banquo says of them,

The earth hath bubbles as the water has,  
And these are of them : whither are they vanished ?

and Macbeth answers :

Into the air, and what seemed corporal melted  
As breath into the wind.

Then Banquo rejoins :

Were such things here as we do speak about ?  
Or have we eaten on the insane root  
That takes the reason prisoner ?

In all this Macbeth and Banquo hesitate as in Holinshed's version where "this was reputed at the first some vain fantastical illusion" by them, and share the doubts of Horatio who says to the Ghost in *Hamlet*,

Stay, illusion,  
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,  
Speak to me !

and of Brutus, who says when his Ill Angel comes to his tent in *Julius Cæsar*,

I think it is a weakness of my eyes  
That shapes this monstrous apparition.  
It comes upon me. Art thou any thing ?  
Art thou some god, some angel or some devil ? . . .  
Now I have taken heart thou vanisheth.

And though Macbeth does not doubt that he sees Banquo's Ghost he recognizes that it is unreal, saying to it,

Hence horrible shadow,  
Unreal mockery hence.

If the Weird Sisters were still unreal they could not throw the ingredients into the cauldron. Though they still called

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themselves the Weird Sisters (or according to the First Folio version, the Weyward Sisters) when they sang,

The Weird Sisters, hand in hand  
Posters of the sea and land,  
Thus do go about, about,

they were changed to mere Witches when Macbeth said,

You seem to understand me  
By each at once her choppy fingers laying  
Upon her skinny lips : you should be women,  
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret  
That you are so.

These Witches were not impalpable Spirits, but bearded old women who were accustomed to ride on broomsticks at night, and only their beards made Macbeth think them unnatural.

Two Songs are named in the Witch Scenes : the Stage Directions say in the third Act "Music and a song with 'Come away, Come away,' " and in the fourth Act "Music and a Song, 'Black Spirits.' " It so happens that both these Songs are to be found in Thomas Middleton's Play, *The Witch*.

Swinburne wrote of *Macbeth* with his usual eloquence in his *Essay on Thomas Middleton* : "That the editors to whom we owe the miserably defaced and villainously garbled text which is all that has reached us of *Macbeth*, not content with the mutilation of the greater Poet had recourse to the interpolation of a few superfluous or incongruous lines or fragments from the lyric portions of the lesser Poet's work—that the Players who mangled Shakespeare were the pilferers who plundered Middleton—must be obvious to all but those (if any such yet exist anywhere) who are capable of believing the unspeakably impudent assertion of those mendacious malefactors that they have left us a pure and perfect edition of Shakespeare. These passages are all thoroughly in keeping with the general tone of the lesser Poet's work : it would be tautology to add that they are no less utterly out of keeping with the general tone of the other. But in their own way nothing can be finer : they have a tragic liveliness in ghastli-

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ness, a grotesque animation of horror, which no other poet has ever conceived or conveyed to us. The difference between Michel Angelo and Goya, Tintoretto and Gustave Doré, does not quite efface the right of the minor artists to existence or remembrance."

Since Simon Forman's notes show that the Weird Sisters were changed to Witches in or after 1610, we can guess that this was done because the audience preferred solid Witches to impalpable Spirits. If Shakespeare did it, he wrote for once in a manner which has been taken as Middleton's, and may have acknowledged the debt to him by employing two of his Songs. If Middleton did it, he wrote for once with a strength greatly beyond his usual scope, and the use of those Songs would have been an obvious way of claiming the credit.

Middleton's *Witch* seems to have been copied from Jonson's *Masque of the Queens*, which was acted at Whitehall in February, 1609-1610, and printed in 1616. Ben Jonson wrote in the Introduction to it: "Because Her Majesty (best knowing that a principal part of life in these *spectacles* lay in their variety) had commanded me to think on some new dance, that might precede hers, and have the place of a foil or false Masque: I was careful to decline, not only from others but mine own steps in that kind, since the last year I had an anti-masque of boys, and therefore now devised that twelve women in the habit of Hags or Witches, sustaining the persons of Ignorance, Suspicion, Credulity, etc., the opposites to good Fame, should fill that part, not as a Masque, but a spectacle of strangeness." He added that the Scene was "an ugly Hell, which flaming beneath, smoked unto the top of the roof. . . . These Witches with a kind of hollow and infernal Music came forth from thence. First one, then two and three and more, till their number increased to eleven, all differently attired, some with rats on their heads, some on their shoulders, others with ointment-pots at their girdles; all with spindles, timbrels, rattles or other venefical instruments, making a confused noise with strange gestures. The device of their attire was Master Jones his, with the invention and architecture of the whole Scene and Machine. Only I prescribed them their properties of vipers, snakes, bones, herbs, roots



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and other ensigns of their Magic, out of the authority of ancient and later writers, wherein the faults are mine, if there be any found, and for that cause I confess them."

I do not think that Ben Jonson would have written in this way if similar Witches using similar language had already sung and danced in Macbeth, so this statement seems to me to support Forman's assertion that the Weird Sisters were still Fairies or Nymphs in 1610.

Jonson's Witches begin,  
Sisters stay, we want our Dame,  
Call upon her by her name,  
And the charm we use to say,  
That she quickly anoint and come away.

In his marginal comments he writes: "Among our vulgar Witches the honour of Dame (for I so translate it) is given with a kind of pre-eminence to some special one at their meetings. . . . When they are to be transported from place to place they use to anoint themselves and sometimes the things they ride." When one of his witches proclaims,

I had a dagger, what did I with that?  
Killed an infant to have his fat,

he explains "their killing of infants is common, both for confection of their ointment (whereto one ingredient is the fat boiled, as I have showed before out of Paracelsus and Porta), as also out of a lust to do murder." And when another sings,

I went to the Toad breeds under the wall;  
I charmed him out and he came at my call.  
I scratched out the eyes of the Owl before,  
I tore the Bat's wings, what would you more?

he explains: "These also both by the confessions of Witches and testimony of Writers are of principal use in their Witchcraft." His Dame is not Hecate, for in her Invocation she says,

You that have seen me ride when Hecate  
Durst not take chariot,

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and in his marginal note (which is fortified, like the rest, with many Classical references) he says that Hecate "was believed to govern in Witchcraft, and is remembered in all their invocations." His *Spectacle* ends with the Witches singing,

About, about, and about,  
Till the mists arise and the lights fly out :  
The images neither be seen nor felt,  
The woollen burn, and the waxen melt ;  
Sprinkle your liquors upon the ground,  
And into the air, around, around.

"At which with a strange and sudden music they fell into a Magical dance." And his last note of them says, "The manner also of their dancing is confused, and to be done with great religion : Boden adds that they use brooms in their hands, with which we armed our Witches, and here we leave them."

Instead of concluding that Jonson took his Witches from Shakespeare for a Court Entertainment, as he must have done if *Macbeth* had been acted with the Witches in it some years before, and lavished his learning to prove that all Shakespeare's details were justified by Classical writers, I infer that the Witches seen in *Macbeth* came from his *Spectacle*. Middleton introduced Hecate in control of his Witches, probably imitating Jonson in this, and since Hecate had nothing to do with English or Scottish Witchcraft the same use of her seems one of the signs that the Witches in *Macbeth* were derived from Ben Jonson's *Masque of the Queens*.

It does not seem probable that Shakespeare would have paid him the compliment of such imitation after 1610 or that the Players would have employed Middleton to imitate Jonson while Jonson was still working for them. It may be that Ben Jonson altered *Macbeth* after 1610 (and probably after 1616) for a performance at Court to suit the King's taste, and shortened it and introduced his own Witches instead of the Weird Sisters or Destinies. He may have introduced the three Apparitions to utter words which the Weird Sisters had spoken in a second appearance, and he may have modelled the Show of the Eight Kings on his *Masques*. This is one of the three of Shakespeare's Tragedies which

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he mentioned by name (and only when he wished to find fault with them) for, according to Dryden, "in reading some bombastic speeches of Macbeth, which are not to be understood, he used to say it was horror." Since he had so little respect for Shakespeare's methods he would not have hesitated to alter the Play according to his notions of art.

Middleton was modest by nature and did not exhibit the boldness or the strength of this change anywhere else. The resemblance between these Witches and his may be due to the fact that they all sprang from the Spectacle in the *Masque of the Queens*. The two Songs used in both Plays may have been borrowed from *The Witch* for *Macbeth* or repeated in it, for it does not seem to have been printed before 1778, and in either case they may have been written by Jonson, who may have helped Middleton in *The Witch*, as he did in *The Widow*, which was printed in 1652.

This change dominates the mood of the Play. Macbeth's doings are altered as Hamlet's would be if instead of the Ghost he saw a solid Devil adorned with horns and a tail. It may be that Shakespeare could no more have imagined solid Witches when he dealt with the Other World than Ben Jonson could have drawn a shadowy Ghost. And it may be that *Macbeth* owes much of its success on the Stage to an alteration which wrenched it from Shakespeare's Country to the everyday World.

One effect of this change is that Macbeth is overcome by the Devil. The Weird Sisters were merely prophetic, and even if they uttered the words now assigned to the Apparitions they only equivocated like the Greek Oracles. The Witches are openly in league with the Devil and the prophecy "Thou shalt be King hereafter" has become a temptation. Neither the Weird Sisters nor the Witches foretold that Macbeth would murder the King. According to Holinshed he thought at first that the prophecy meant that he would succeed to the Throne "by the Divine Providence," and even when he began to think of Rebellion was more moved by his wife; "the words of the Weird Sisters also greatly encouraged him thereto; but especially his wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as she was very ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to bear the name of Queen." The real temptation

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did not come from the Weird Sisters, but from the King's uninvited visit to Inverness, of which Macbeth could have said with King John,

How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds  
Makes ill deeds done !

In the Play, as we have it, this visit is a second temptation linked with the prophecy.

The force of this temptation was less in the Play as it was before it was shortened. In that form Macbeth saw his wife before the visit was planned and suggested the crime to her. She says in the seventh Scene of the first Act :

What beast was it then  
That made you break this enterprise to me ?  
When you durst do it, then you were a man ;  
And, to be more than what you were, you would  
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place  
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both :  
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now  
Does unmake you.

He did this before he saw the Weird Sisters, and so they were of much less importance because they merely strengthened his project.

Simon Forman suggested another change when he wrote, "And when Mackbeth had murdered the King, the blood on his hands could not be washed off, by any means, nor from his wife's hands, which handled the bloody daggers in hiding them, by which means they became both much amazed and offended." In the Play, as we have it, *Macbeth* says in the second Act,

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hand ?

and Lady Macbeth answers,

My hands are of your colour, but I shame  
To wear a heart so white. I hear a knocking  
At the South entry : retire we to our chamber :  
A little water clears us of this deed.



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She echoes his words and her own when she says in the fifth Act, seeming to wash her hands, "Out, damned spot, out I say. Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him? Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale: I tell you yet again Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave."

In the Play, as we have it, she does not see the Weird Sisters or Witches, and Banquo's Ghost is hidden from her: she is only in touch with the Other World through her husband. Perhaps Shakespeare saw that this effect would be spoilt by a Scene in which she and her husband could not wash the blood from their hands and so cancelled that superfluous horror. According to Forman, she did not smear the servants with blood, but only handled the bloody daggers in hiding them. This may be a sign that in the form of this Play acted in 1610 she was absolved from any share in the crime except her encouragement of her wavering husband, and that a later version of it (which may have been Ben Jonson's) restored her former iniquity.

This Play, as we have it, is damaged because it is confused with a young story of horrors and because it is controlled by the change of the Weird Sisters to Witches, for this changes its atmosphere and while making it popular and fit to attract the roughest audience degrades it by altering a Poem to Prose. While like *Hamlet* and *King Lear* and *Othello* it has a nobility and passionate strength which set it apart from *Julius Cæsar*, it is divided, like them, from *Antony and Cleopatra* because its chief Characters are partly transformed and because the merits and faults of *Titus Andronicus* are still to be seen.

Robert Burton wrote of the Diseases of the Mind in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, printed in 1621, "Dotage, Fatuity or Folly is a common name to all the following species as some will have it. Laurentius and Altomarus comprehended Madness, Melancholy and the rest under this name and call it the *Summum genus* of them all." And when he defined Melancholy he wrote, "The *Summum genus* is Dotage or Anguish of the Mind, saith Aretæus. . . . We properly call that Dotage, as Laurentius interprets it, when some one

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principal faculty of the Mind, as Imagination or Reason, is corrupted, as all melancholy persons have.”

While all these last Tragedies deal with dotage only two of them, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, are concerned with Melancholy tending to Madness, for though Timon is thought crazy his savage indignation is justified. There is the same theme in these Plays, the Melancholy or the Anguish of Mind of a nature too noble for the everyday World.

Shakespeare could have said to Hamlet and Lear with the Messenger in the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*,

Too much sadness hath congealed your blood,  
And Melancholy is the nurse of Frenzy.

These Plays are companions because *Hamlet* sprang from Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and *King Lear* from Shakespeare's imitation of it in *Titus Andronicus*.

All we know of the publication of *Hamlet* is that a crude form of that Play now called the First Quarto was printed in 1603 and a much longer one in the following year and that this was reprinted in 1605 and 1611 and was changed in the Folio of 1623.

There is an entry in the Stationers' Register on July 26, 1602, according to which a printer named Roberts entered a book called *The Revenge of Hamlet, Prince Denmark*, “as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain his Servants.” A bookseller named Nicholas Ling published the First Quarto in the following year without a printer's name, calling it “*The Tragical History of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, By William Shakespeare, As it hath been divers times acted by His Highness's Servants in the City of London, as also in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford and elsewhere.” And in 1604 the Second Quarto was published with the title page, “*The Tragical History of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy, at London, printed by J. R. for N. L.”

Some students have held that the First Quarto was a pirated version and that the entry in the Stationers' Register referred to the second one which was legitimate and corrected the other. Still, both were produced by Nicholas Ling, and

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it may be that all the Quartos were pirated. Heminge and Condell seemed to affirm this in their Address to the Reader in the Folio of 1623, but Mr. Pollard, for instance, contends in his *Shakespeare's Fights with the Pirates* that they only referred to four inaccurate Quartos, *Romeo and Juliet* of 1597, *King Henry the Fifth* of 1600, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* of 1602, and *Hamlet* of 1603. In any case, the First Quarto of *Hamlet* seems to have been compiled from rough notes taken while the Play was performed and the Second one printed from an accurate copy.

The entry in the Stationers' Register seems to prove that the Play was called *Hamlet's Revenge* in 1602, and the Quartos, taken together, show that many changes in it were made in or after 1603—even some of the names of the Characters are altered; for instance, in the First Quarto Polonius is called Corambis.

Thomas Lodge wrote in *Wit's Misery and the World's Madness*, printed in 1596, that Hate-Virtue "looks as pale as the vizard of the Ghost which cried so miserably at the theatre like an oyster-wife, 'Hamlet, Revenge.'" In *Satiromastix*, which is ascribed to Dekker and others and seems to have been acted in 1601, Captain Tucca says, "My name is Hamlet Revenge." In *Westward Ho*, which was printed in 1607, we read, "Ay, but when light wives make heavy husbands, let their husbands play mad Hamlet and cry revenge." And in Rowland's *Night Raven*, which was printed in 1620, there are the words, "I will not cry 'Hamlet, revenge my griefs.'" It has been argued that these and similar allusions must show that there was another Play on this theme because the Ghost does not cry "Hamlet, revenge!", but this seems a rash inference. In the Play, as we have it, the Ghost says,

If ever thou didst thy dear father love,  
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

It may be that in the early forms of this Play he cried "Hamlet, revenge!" under the Stage, and that this was altered to "Swear" because it had become ludicrous through its use as a catchword, or this may have been done because the call was too openly copied from the Ghost in *Jeronimo*, whose cry

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for revenge was cited by Dekker in *The Seven Deadly Sins of London*, printed in 1606: "I would that every miserable debtor that so dies might be buried at his creditor's door, that when he strides over him he might think he still rises up (like the Ghost in *Jeronimo*) crying 'Revenge.'"

Henslowe's Diary proves that a Play called *Hamlet* was acted in 1594 at Newington Butts by the Admiral's Men performing with the Chamberlain's Servants. Since the two Companies were acting together this may have been written by Shakespeare. It is possible that a juvenile Play was revised and revived in 1601 and, if so, there is no need to imagine that there was another popular *Hamlet* which has been lost. The fact that Meres did not cite *Hamlet* in 1598 may only mean that it was obsolete then like all the other Plays of Revenge except *Jeronimo* and *Titus Andronicus*. I do not think that Shakespeare would have turned to employ their obsolete methods if he had been inventing a Play in 1601.

Many of the faults of the First Quarto seem due to the fact that it was founded on notes. For instance, while in the Second Quarto Polonius says,

But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade,

the First Quarto makes Corambis say,

But do not dull the palm with entertain  
Of every new unfledged courage.

And throughout the First Quarto the Prose and Blank Verse are confused and misprinted as they might have been if they had been copied from recitation alone.

Throughout the Second Quarto revision and expansion are evident. In the First Quarto Leartes (whose name is Laertes afterwards) says of Ofelia,

So she is drowned :  
Too much of water hath thou, Ofelia,  
Therefore I will not drown thee in my tears.  
Revenge it is must yield this heart relief,  
For woe begets woe, and grief hangs on grief.



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In the Second Quarto, Laertes says,

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
And therefore I forbid my tears: but yet  
It is our trick; nature her custom holds  
Let shame say what it will; when these are gone,  
The woman will be out,

and the Queen says,

One woe doth tread upon another's heels  
So fast they follow.

The first version seems a faulty note of a passage which was revised in the second.

The revision sometimes omits passages, for instance when Hamlet says in the Second Quarto, "That's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it," the first Quarto continues in Prose, printed as Verse,

And then you have some again that keep one suit  
Of jests, as a man is known by one suit of  
Apparel,

and gives examples of such jests which may show that the blame was meant for Kemp who had quarrelled with Shakespeare's Company in 1599 or in the following year. If these jests were Kemp's favourite ones a hit of this kind might well have been short-lived in the Play.

This passage, the advice to the Players, offers a clue to the date of one of the versions. The years in which Essex was seen hesitating and half demented like Hamlet, 1600 and 1601, were marked by three things which had a personal effect on the Players: these were the War of the Poets and the sudden success of the Boy-Players, the Children, and the Privy Council Decree of June, 1600, against "the immoderate use and company of Play Houses and Players," according to which only two Theatres, The Fortune and Globe, were to be used, and these only on two days in a week, and no Plays were to be acted elsewhere in or near London. There are allusions to these things in the second Act of this Play when Hamlet asks why the Tragedians of the City are travelling and Rosencrantz answers, "I think

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their inhibition comes by reason of the late innovation," and adds that there is "an eyrie of children . . . these are now the fashion," and that they are now employed in a feud, "there was for a while no money bid for argument unless the Poet and the Player went to cuffs in the question." And Rosencrantz' assertion that the boys carry it away, "ay, that they do, my lord, Hercules and his load too," may refer to Ben Jonson, who ceased working for the Chamberlain's Servants in 1599 and wrote *Cynthia's Revels* for the Children of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel in 1600.

This advice to the Players is abbreviated in the First Quarto. There Gilderstone only says that the Tragedians travel because

Novelty carries it away,  
For the principal public audience that  
Came to them are turned to private Plays  
And to the humour of children.

This may have been a hasty note of that passage, and in any case it proves that this Quarto was not merely a version of an obsolete Play. And it is not probable that the allusions to the War of the Poets and the Privy Council Decree were added after 1602.

It may be that the Scenes with the Players were a separate Interlude written as a companion to the Interlude of the Rustical Players in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The City Tragedians are introduced in the same way as the Players are in the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, and they act samples of their old stock-in-trade, a Murder-Play with a Dumb-show, and a Senecan Tragedy. Since both these entertainments were obsolete in 1601 we can infer that this Interlude was earlier work.

The Senecan Tragedy is a plain imitation of *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. That Play was printed in 1594, and in it the same scene is described and Pyrrhus stands still after Priam's death,

So leaning on his sword, he stood stone still,  
Viewing the fire wherewith rich Ilion burnt.

In this imitation of it Pyrrhus hesitates before he kills Priam,

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So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,  
And like a neutral to his will and matter,  
Did nothing.  
But as we often see, against some storm,  
A silence in the heavens, the rack stands still,  
The bold winds speechless and the orb below  
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
Doth rend the region, so after Pyrrhus' pause  
Aroused vengeance sets him new awork;  
And never did the Cyclops' hammer fall  
On Mars's armour, forged for proof eterne,  
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.

It may be that these speeches survive from a Tragedy which Shakespeare had written or had begun to write in his Youth. In the Play, as we have it, Hamlet knew that he stood in Pyrrhus' place,

And like a neutral to his will and matter,  
Did nothing,

and this was why he had asked the Players to remember that speech. The Play itself has the same hesitation. Mr. Masfield says of it, "The baffling of Fate's purpose leads to a condition in life like the 'slack water' between tides. . . . The Play seems to hesitate and stand still while the energies spilled in the baffling of Fate work and simmer and grow strong."

This Interlude of the Players is a comment on the rest of the story in the same way as the Comedies of the Rustical Players and of Falstaff are comments on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Tragedy of Hotspur. It is divided in the Play, as we have it, as those other Interludes are. It seems to be meant to be a token of Sanity, for it shows Hamlet as one who is still able to give sober advice and as one who was fond of acting and able to simulate emotion at will. And it may have been blended with the Tragedy of Hamlet's Revenge when he began to be sane.

The statement of Hamlet's age is one of the changes in the Play as we have it. When in the fifth Act the First

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Clown is asked how long he has been a grave-maker he says, "Of all days in the year, I came to it that day that our last King Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras . . . it was that very day that young Hamlet was born," and he adds, "I have been sexton here, man and boy, these thirty years." This can only mean that Hamlet is thirty. In the First Quarto this Clown says of Yorick's skull,

Here's a skull hath been here this dozen years,

but in the Second Quarto he says, "This skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years." Hamlet must have been a child in the days when Yorick kissed him and carried him. According to the Second Quarto, he was seven years old when Yorick died. If so, the First Quarto exhibited him as only nineteen.

It is probable that in the First Quarto Yorick was meant to suggest Richard Tarleton, who acted the Clown Derick in *The Famous Victories of King Henry the Fifth* and died about a dozen years before 1601, in 1588. If so, we can infer that the Scene with the sextons was one of the things added in 1601.

It is a coincidence that the Earl of Southampton was aged thirty in 1603. If we could conclude that he was drawn as Hamlet we could infer that the first version was written when he was young. If Shakespeare first saw him in 1587 and quickly professed a fantastic admiration for him, he may have borne him in mind when he was writing a Tragedy as he may have done also in Italianate Comedies like *Love's Labour's Lost*. And it so happened that Southampton was linked with the story of Hamlet.

That story as it was told by Saxo Grammaticus seems partly based on the Mediæval Romance of *Bevis of Hampton*. In that Romance the wicked Sir Murdure killed the hero's father, Sir Guy, and struck off his head :

To a Knight he took his head in hand,  
"Go," he said, "and bear this fonde  
To the Countess that is so bright,  
And say I come to her bower this night,"

and Bevis rebuked his mother when he was seven, swearing



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to avenge his dead father, and twice afterwards before his adventures, and kept his word by boiling Sir Murther.

Amaury Duval, in his *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, contended that this story was French and that Sir Bevis came from Antonne, but though it was probably first written in French, it dealt with the English home of Romance and the English version recognized this, setting the tale in Putney, for instance, and ending,

Thus endeth Bevis of South Hampton,  
King and Knight of great renown.

The young Earl of Southampton was frequently compared to Sir Bevis, as when he was welcomed at Oxford in 1592,

Jure suo dives quem South-Hamptonia magnum  
Vendicat heroem,

and when Peele praised him in *Anglorum Ferie* in 1595. But though the melancholy which haunted his life and his outbursts of rage and sudden recklessness gave him a resemblance to Hamlet, this was shared by his friend Essex, who was nineteen when he first became prominent in 1588 and was thirty-two when he was beheaded. Though both must have been in Shakespeare's mind in the days following the Essex Revolt, his last Hamlet has more in common with Essex.

It may be that he made Hamlet a youth first because he was young himself and ripened him because his own heart had grown to maturity. And he had another reason for making Hamlet mature in 1603 in the fact that Richard Burbage, for whom the Character was written, was then about thirty-six. Besides, the meditations came better from a grown man than from a boy of nineteen.

The fact that this change is made in the Second Quarto appears one of the signs that the Play represented in the First Quarto was a hasty revision. The change was imperfect, for Hamlet still acted with the moods of a boy because this was essential to the drift of the Play. Even if Hamlet was thirty Shakespeare could still have called him young: in *Much Ado About Nothing* he wrote, "How giddily a turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-

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thirty." And when Southampton was aged about twenty-eight Cecil called him "the poor young Earl."

This was a change from the original story, and there was another when in the Second Quarto the Queen no longer said,

But as I have a soul, I swear by Heaven  
I never knew of this most horrid murder,

and no longer took sides with Hamlet, saying,

I will conceal, consent, and do my best  
What stratagem so e'er thou shalt devise.

In the Play, as we have it, she stands neutral, hesitating between her son and her husband. This change extenuates Hamlet's wild behaviour to her.

Another change in the Play is the omission of a definite Creed. The Ghost is apart from all the rest in the Plays, for it is the only Catholic one. Reginald Scot wrote in his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, printed in 1584: "How common an opinion was it among the Papists that all souls walked on the earth after they had departed from their bodies! In so much as it was in the time of Popery a usual matter to desire sick people on their death-beds to appear to them after their death and to reveal their estate. . . . The walking of these souls (saith Michael Andreas) is a most excellent argument for the proof of Purgatory, for (saith he) these souls have testified that which the Popes have affirmed on that behalf. . . . They never appear to the whole multitude, seldom to few and most commonly to one alone."

In Shakespeare's time there were many Catholic stories of ghosts seeking prayers, for instance, the one recorded in *Father Manger's Narrative*, printed in *Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers*, according to which the eighth Lord Stourton's ghost appeared to Father Cornelius, who was saying Mass in Sir John Arundell's house in London: "the dead man appeared to him at the Altar entirely surrounded with flames. . . . The Father asked him wherefore he was in that state and what he wished for. The apparition mentioned who he was and in what suffering: he entreated

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his prayers and those of all of them : then he vanished." In this story the ghost was only seen by Father Cornelius, though Lord Stourton's mother, who had married Sir John Arundell, was hearing the Mass.

In this Play as we have it a Catholic version survives, contradicted by a Roman Philosophy : Hamlet still laments that his father died without the Last Sacraments, but now (after seeing his ghost and hearing it prove the rejected Doctrine of Purgatory) he can speak of,

The undiscovered country from whose bourne  
No traveller returns.

In the First Quarto, the passage beginning "To be or not to be" runs thus :

To be or not to be, ay, there is the point,  
To die, to sleep, is that all ? Ay, all :  
No, to sleep, to dream, ay, marry there it goes,  
For in that dream of death, when we awake  
And borne before an everlasting Judge,  
From whence no passenger ever returned,  
The undiscovered country, at whose sight  
The happy smile and the accursed are damned,  
But for this, the joyful hope of this,  
Who'd bear the scorns and flattery of the World  
Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the poor ?  
The widow being oppressed, the orphan wronged,  
The taste of hunger, or a tyrant's reign,  
And thousand more calamities besides,  
To grunt and sweat under this weary life,  
When that he may his full *Quietus* make  
With a bare bodkin, who would this endure  
But for a hope of something after death ?

This first version looks like a confused note of a passage which had been changed, but the man who made such a note could hardly have mistaken the drift by adding the joyful hope and the compensating Justice of God.

It may be that when Shakespeare revised Hamlet in 1601 he began a change which he developed in 1603, turning it into a Philosophical Play in Seneca's manner. And it may

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be that this change was suggested by the revision of *Julius Cæsar* in which he copied Plutarch by making Brutus expound the Stoic Philosophy.

He may have studied the younger Seneca's Philosophical Works, such as *Ad Lucilium Epistolæ Morales*, as well as his Tragedies, for he seems to echo them often. For instance, in the eighty-second Epistle, *Contra delicias*, Seneca writes : "Illa quoque res morti nos alienat, quod hæc jam novimus : illa ad quæ transituri sumus, nescimus qualia sint, et horremus ignota. Naturalis præterea tenebrarum metus est, in quas adductura mors creditur." Still, such meditations are common to all who have ever paused to reflect, and so we cannot conclude that when Shakespeare made Polonius advise Laertes on friendship he was thinking of Seneca's third Epistle, "Diu cogita, an tibi in amicitiam aliquis recipiendus sit. Cum placuerit fieri, toto illum pectore admitte," or that when he helped himself to other men's work he was guided by the sixteenth Epistle, "Quicquid bene dictum est ab ullo, meum est," any more than we can decide that when he made Hamlet fear Death he remembered Bacon's *Essay on Death* (which was first printed in 1597), beginning, "Men fear Death as children fear to go in the dark : and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other." Neither need we think that he borrowed Hamlet's doubts from the *Troades* as when the Chorus says,

Verum est, an timidos fabula decipit,

or Andromache says,

Si manes habent

Curas priores, nec perit flamma amor,

or that he was remembering Catullus',

Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum

Illuc unde negant redire quenquam

or any of the scores of such phrases in the poets of Rome when he wrote of the country from which no traveller returns.

If he turned in these days from Ovid to Seneca's Meditations and Plutarch he resembled Montaigne, who wrote when he had secluded himself in his country home in his



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fortieth year that he had loved Ovid in his Youth and had grown weary of him, "Sa facilité et ses inventions qui m'ont ravy autrefois, à peine m'entretiennent-elles à cette heure. . . . Les livres qui me servent c'est Plutarque, depuis qu'il est François, et Seneque." The younger Seneca's Philosophical Works had always been popular, partly because his reflections were mediocre and practical and partly because the tone of his piety led Tradition to say that he was a Christian and a friend of Saint Paul's. Chaucer, for instance, wrote of him in *The Man of Law's Tale*,

Well can Senek and many philosopher  
Bywaylen Time, more than gold in coffer,

and in *The Tale of Melibeus*, "Measure of weeping should be conserved after the lore of Christ that teacheth us Senec," and in *The Monk's Tale*,

For of Morality he was the flower.

The author of *Piers Plowman* wrote,

And proven it by Seneca  
That all thing under Heaven ought to be in commune.

And Ben Jonson showed his admiration by borrowing much of Seneca's wisdom.

All the meditations in *Hamlet* are as old as the hills, and this is one of the reasons why this Play is immortal. The note of mediocrity in them has ensured them a fame which would not have crowned a difficult greatness. For instance, in the passage beginning "To be or not to be," the reflections on the sorrows of Life and on the terror of Death will always be popular because they are common; but the more beautiful Sonnet,

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry

and the supreme harmonies of *Measure for Measure* are "caviare to the general."

In Plutarch's *Life of Marcus Brutus Cassius* explains the Vision according to the Epicureans: "In our sect, Brutus, we have an opinion that we do not always feel or see that which we suppose we do both see and feel, but that our senses

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being credulous and therefore easily abused (when they are idle and unoccupied in their own objects) are induced to imagine they see and conjecture that which in truth they do not. . . . For our imagination doth upon a small fancy grow from conceit to conceit, uttering both in passions and forms of things imagined. For the mind of man is ever occupied, and that continual moving is nothing but an imagination. But yet there is a further cause of this in you. For you, being by nature given to melancholic discoursing, and of late continually occupied, your wits and senses having been once laboured, do easier yield to such imagination."

Hamlet is weary of life and given to melancholic discoursing before he sees the Ghost. Even in the First Quarto he says,

The spirit that I have seen may be the Devil,  
And out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such men,  
May seek to damn me.

In the First Quarto Ofelia says,

O young Prince Hamlet ! the only flower of Denmark,  
He is bereft of all the wealth he had,  
The jewel that adorned his feature most  
Is filched and stolen away, his wits bereft him.

In the Second Quarto she does not say this, and when Polonius asks " Mad for thy love ? " she replies,

My Lord, I do not know,  
But truly I do fear it.

In the First Quarto the King says after this,

Right noble friends, that our dear Cousin Hamlet  
Hath lost the very heart of all his sense  
It is most right, and we most sorry for him,

but in the similar passage in the Second Quarto he says,

Something you have heard  
Of Hamlet's transformation : so I call it  
Sith not the exterior nor the inward man  
Resembles that it was.

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The people who saw the Play which the First Quarto represented were told that Hamlet was mad immediately after his hysterical merriment when he encountered the Ghost, and they had no reason to think that they were being misled. In the Second Quarto the other Characters hesitate, and they are the best judges because they have seen much that is not shown on the stage : Ophelia would not suffer so much if she was sure that he raved.

In the original story *Hamlet* simulated Insanity to protect himself against the King's malice. It may be that Shakespeare changed this when he made the story resemble *The Spanish Tragedy* by introducing the Ghost in it and by making it end tragically. In the Play, as we have it, the King shows no malice till he is threatened by Hamlet. It may be that in the first version Hamlet shared the distraction of old Hieronimo and Titus Andronicus, who are both partly sane : Hieronimo says,

I am not mad :

I know thee to be Pedro, and he Jaques,

in the same way as Andronicus says,

I am not mad : I know thee well enough,

and as Queen Elizabeth said, " I am not mad : you must not think to make Queen Jane of me." This may have been changed gradually to put Hamlet in touch with the audience, but even in the Play, as we have it, his Sanity is left open to doubt. Horatio's grief is the best evidence for it, since he must have known the truth, and he is supported when Fortinbras says at the end,

He was likely had he been put on  
To have proved most royally.

But Hamlet's soliloquies and his talk with the Ghost are as distracted as his Scenes with his mother or with the King. If we judge him by the Play, as we have it, we can only conclude that he was more mad than he thought he was though more sane than some other people believed. And this seems more evident if we compare this Play with *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*. No dramatist intending

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

to write a Play in which his hero should merely feign madness would begin it by making him long to kill himself while he is alone. There is no room for doubt in *King Lear* when Edgar is simulating Insanity.

Anthony Scoloker wrote in *Daiphantus or the Passions of Love*, printed in 1604, "Or to come home to the vulgar's element, like friendly Shakespeare's Tragedies where the Comedian rides when the Tragedian stands on tip toe, faith, it should please all like Prince Hamlet. But in sadness then it were to be feared would run mad," and he said that the Lover,

Puts off his clothes, his shirt he only wears,  
Much like mad Hamlet, then as passion tears.

In *Westward Ho*, printed in 1607, it was said, "Let their husbands play mad Hamlet and cry Revenge," and in Dekker's *Lanthorn and Candle-light*, printed in 1609, "but if any mad Hamlet, hearing this, smell villainy and rush in by violence."

These references cannot determine whether Hamlet was supposed to be mad or to be feigning Insanity; but there may be a clue to their meaning in Samuel Johnson's note on this Play. He wrote in his *General Observations*, "If the dramas of Shakespeare were to be characterized, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the Tragedy of *Hamlet* the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous that the argument of the Play would make a long tale. The Scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations; and solemnity, not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New Characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth."

It so happened that *Hamlet* was one of the few Plays by Shakespeare which had always been popular. Betterton had won fame as the Prince and as he seems to have begun acting in 1659 and to have joined Davenant's Company in



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1661 he may well have known how Burbage looked on this part. It is probable that Garrick adopted the traditional view when he followed Betterton and that when Johnson wrote "the pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth" he was repeating the verdict of the people who saw Burbage as Hamlet. If so, Hamlet was rather a Comical than a Tragical Character, and this would explain why Scoloker appears to allege that he tore off his clothes (as Lear did in the storm) except his shirt, in one of the Scenes. This Tragi-comical idea of Hamlet would explain why he mocked the Ghost and Polonius and jested with the Players and Gravediggers.

Johnson's note proves that this Play was shown in his day not as a Tragedy but as a Tragi-comical Pantomime in the Classical sense. And the things in it which could be reckoned as faults if it was judged as a Tragedy are justified if it is taken to be a Pantomime, a picture of life the more accurate because it contrasts sorrow and laughter and because misunderstandings and doubts and baffled dreams darken its mirth. A Tragedy can only be checked by the repetition of platitudes and it must be left ineffectual if the purposes fail and it must have the climax of a Tragical moment. In this Play there are no Tragical moments, unless we include the casual slaughter which repeats the indiscriminate end of *Titus Andronicus*: the chief picture of Hamlet shows him holding a skull and making the most obvious reflections on it. He is above all things a spectator, and this (which would be a fault in a Tragedy) keeps him in touch with the audience watching the Play. He interprets the Tragedy, which is part of the Pantomime, instead of controlling it and he is the victim of his own meditations. This justifies these meditations: they express the thoughts of the audience and therefore (as Johnson remarked) they are not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. The poetical violence which lifted *Macbeth* and *King Lear* and *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra* above the scope of everyday Life separated the Tragical victims of those Plays from the audience and those Plays were made alien by a terrible beauty.

The vagueness of Hamlet's character now keeps him in

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touch with people who could not see their own nature in a definite hero. Coleridge, for instance, and Goethe and Schlegel were able to see themselves depicted as Hamlet though they had very little in common with the English of Queen Elizabeth's time. This vagueness may be due to the fact that the boy of the first version, the Andronicus-Hamlet, remains confused with the Essex-Hamlet, the man whose soul is tossed to and fro. Perhaps Shakespeare knew Hamlet too intimately to draw him distinctly, as a father looks on his son remembering him a baby in arms.

It may be that he recognized the advantage of this. Actors of all sizes and shapes or of any character or none can attempt Hamlet's part because he is vague. And the Play itself shares this advantage—it can be acted in any language or mood. The melancholy Victorian version with its sorrowful Prince, who would have scorned to cause laughter by only wearing a shirt, was no less admired than Garrick's bright Pantomime. The profound German Hamlet of recent days was as popular as the old *Der Bestrafte Brudermord*, a Comical Tragedy which must represent an early form of this Play since it keeps the old names, such as Corambis. This Play is the more lifelike because its meaning is left open to doubt, like the drift and the character of current affairs. And it is universal because Hamlet expresses the common thoughts of Mankind.

## THE TRAGEDIES

### II

**A**N entry in the Stationers' Register dated November the twenty-sixth, 1607, records that *King Lear* was played "before the King's Majesty on St. Stephen's Night at Christmas last" and in the next year a Quarto edition was published under the title, "Mr. William Shakespeare his True Chronicle History of the Life and Death of King Lear and his three Daughters. With the unfortunate life of Edgar, son and heir to the Earl of Gloster, and his sullen and assumed humour of Tom of Bedlam. As it was played before the King's Majesty at Whitehall upon St Stephen's Night in Christmas Holidays." This Quarto was printed again in the same year or in 1619. The title page of the Quartos may have been written in 1607 or the Tragedy may have been acted at Court both in that year and in 1606.

Sir Israel Gollancz, who says that "the Play of *King Lear* may safely be assigned to the year 1605," cites for proofs of this the entry in the Stationers' Register, the fact that (according to him) the names of Edgar's devils and many of the allusions in the fourth Scene of the third Act were derived from Harsnett's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, which was first published in 1603, and the facts that "British man" is substituted for "Englishman" in the famous Nursery rhyme and that the mention of late eclipses may refer to the eclipse of the sun in October, 1605. But none of these things can prove that this Play was first written then.

The entry in the Stationers' Register in 1607 may deal with a late form of this Tragedy and in any case cannot prove when it was written. If the word "Englishman" was altered to "British man" in allusion to the fact that King James ruled the whole Island of Great Britain, this change might have been made at any time after 1603. Besides, if this was a change, it may have been due to the fact that

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Lear was King of Britain. In those days eclipses were often linked with tragic events, as when Othello said,

Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse  
Of Sun and Moon.

Sir Israel Gollancz says : " This supposition is borne out by the fact that John Harvey's *Discursive Problems Concerning Prophecies*, printed in 1588, actually contains a striking prediction thereof (hence the point of Edmund's comment, 'I am thinking of a prediction I read this other day')." But if Edmund referred to that book he might have read it "this other day" in 1588. And even if we can conclude that Edgar refers to the Exorcisms mentioned by Harsnett, he might have done this before 1586.

Richard Bancroft, who was Bishop of London from 1597 to 1604, when he became Archbishop of Canterbury, seems to have compiled Harsnett's book. Father Antony Rivers wrote to Father Robert Parsons in June, 1602, "His Lordship is in hand with a piece of work touching the incontinency of Priests, for which purpose he hath called unto him Tyrell and some such lost companions." In 1603 Samuel Harsnett, who was then Bancroft's chaplain and became Archbishop of York in 1629, published the fruit of Bancroft's industry as "*A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* to withdraw the hearts of Her Majesty's subjects from their allegiance and from the truth of Christian Religion professed in England, under the pretence of casting out Devils, practised by Edmonds alias Weston a Jesuit, and divers Romish Priests, his wicked associates." Father William Weston wrote afterwards, in his *Account of his Life* (which was probably first written in Spanish), "The book is a vile book, full of the foulest insinuations." Father Anthony Tyrell, Bancroft's chief witness, was arrested in 1586, and in that year (according to his later Confession published by Father John Morris in his *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers*) defended the Exorcisms when he was questioned first, but afterwards yielded. His evidence is of no value on either side because he recanted all his confessions and was three times converted to the Anglican Church when he



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was in prison, though he ended by escaping to Belgium when he was old and dying as a Jesuit there.

These Exorcisms, which Bancroft or Harsnett denounced in 1603, were mainly conducted at Sir George Peckham's house at Denham near Uxbridge and Lord Vaux' house at Hackney before 1586. It is probable that the theatre-goers were not interested in polemical tracts (even when they were able to read) and would have understood the allusions, if there were any, much better in days when the Exorcisms were recent than they would have done when Harsnett produced his belated version of them. Indeed, any such allusions might show that *King Lear* was first written when the Exorcisms near London were the talk of the town.

Some students think that *King Lear* was partly derived from a Play called the *True Chronicle History of King Leir and his three daughters, Gonorill, Ragan and Cordella*, which was printed in 1605, "as it hath been divers and sundry times lately acted." That Play was of an obsolete fashion, and it seems to have been licensed in 1594. Sir Israel Gollancz writes: "It may be pronounced a very favourable specimen of the popular 'comedies' of the period to which it belonged (*circa* 1592) with its conventional classicism, its characteristic attempts at humour, its rhyming couplets." If it was acted in 1604 there must have been a particular reason for reviving it then. There would have been such a reason if Shakespeare's *King Lear* had revived interest in it. Sir Israel Gollancz writes: "It looks indeed as though the original intention of the publishers was to palm off their *Leir* as identical with the great Tragedy of the day." This date, 1604, would agree with *King Lear's* position in the Folio Order, and that is confirmed also by the resemblance between the themes and the structure of this Play and of *Hamlet*. *King Lear* is a Tragical Pantomime: two separate Tragedies are entangled in it and it is crowded with Characters and with Scenes which illuminate a terrible story.

The different manners of *King Lear*, as we have it, prove that Shakespeare had worked on it at different times. In the first Scene Kent says,

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Fare thee well, King : sith thus thou wilt appear,  
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here,

and the King of France says :

Gods, gods ! tis strange that from their coldest neglect  
My love should kindle to inflamed respect.  
Thy dowerless daughter, King, thrown to my chance,  
Is Queen of us, of ours, and our fair France :  
Not all the Dukes of waterish Burgundy  
Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.  
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind :  
Thou lovest here, a better where to find.

And in the first Scene of the second Act Gloucester says :

O madam, my old heart is cracked, is cracked ! . . .  
O lady, lady, shame would have it hid ! . . .  
I know not, madam : 'tis too bad, too bad.

These and similar lines are juvenile work. Throughout the Play, and especially in the first couple of Acts, there are passages of an older Blank Verse such as he wrote when he was finding his music. And all this prentice work is combined with passages of his most beautiful Prose and of his perfect Blank Verse.

Apart from the manner the incidents of *King Lear* are enough to prove that he wrote a form of this Play when he was young. The first Scene, for instance, is juvenile and the blinding of Gloucester on the Stage is a horror which he could only have planned in the days when he wrote *Titus Andronicus* : though he threatened one like it afterwards when he was writing *King John* he made the cruel Hubert relent.

He may have founded the *Tragedy of King Lear and his daughters* on *Albion's England*, printed in 1586, or Holinshed's *Chronicle*, printed in 1578 and 1587, or *The Mirror for Magistrates*, printed in 1587 ; and his use of the name Cordelia instead of Cordeill or Cordila (which may have been a later change) was probably borrowed from the second book of *The Faery Queen*, which was printed in 1590 and had been current before. He may have founded the *Tragedy of Gloucester and his Sons* on a chapter in Philip Sidney's

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*Arcadia*, printed in 1590 but written in 1580 and 1581, "the pitiful state and story of the Paphlagonian unkind king and his kind son," or on the source of that story. It would have been natural to turn to these sources when they were new; but it does not seem probable that he would have depended only on the books of that time many years later.

In all the old sources the tale ended with King Lear's restoration by his daughter Cordeill or Cordelia, who reigned after him and died in old age. Spenser's version was :

So to his Crown she him restored again,  
In which he died, made ripe for death by eld,  
And after wished it should to her remain :  
Who peacefully the same long time did weld,  
And all men's hearts in due obedience held ;  
Till that her sister's children, woxen strong,  
Through proud ambition against her rebelled  
And overcomen kept in prison long,  
Till weary of that wretched life, herself she hong.

Shakespeare altered this with the cruelty of *Titus Andronicus*, and this seems one of the signs that the first form of this Tragedy sprang from that Play in which there is another crazed father, another innocent girl and another monster of wickedness loved by another murderous Queen. And I think that the *Tragedy of Gloucester* must also have belonged to that time. These two Tragical Plays, I think, were revised about 1593 with *Titus Andronicus* and combined then because the fashion demanded longer Plays at that time. This second form may have been the Play called *King Leare* which (according to Henslowe's Diary) was acted at the Rose Theatre in 1594, "by the Queen's Men and My Lord of Sussex, together." And I think that it was the base of the *Tragedy of King Lear* as we have it. The success of *Macbeth* may have helped Shakespeare to turn to another Chronicle History in which King James could see the fate of another very remote ancestor shown, since he claimed descent from King Lear through the Tudors, who (according to Welsh pedigrees) were descended from Regan. And Hamlet's sullen and assumed humour of Tom of Bedlam may have reminded him of the story of Edgar.

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*King Lear* is a Tragedy of the dotage of strength. In the same way as Hamlet's fatuity or dotage began before his suspicions were confirmed by the Ghost and Macbeth had been wrenched to crime by ambition before he saw the Weird Sisters (as his story was told before the Play had been shortened), Lear's dotage preceded the things which crazed him, the belief that his best-beloved daughter was cold to him and the ungrateful behaviour of his two others and the storm on the heath. Regan says of him in the first Act, "'Tis the infirmity of his age: yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself," and Goneril answers, "The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long ingrafted condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them." His love and trust only convince them that he is losing his wits. Edmund thinks in the same way of his father; he says, "I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, which sways not as it hath power but as it is suffered." Essex might have spoken thus of the Queen.

Lear raged against Cordelia because he loved her too much, and this links his doom with Hamlet's and Othello's. All three were wrecked by the hardness of the everyday World, like the sad Kings of the Chronicle Pageant. "Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" says King Lear, and when he is dying Kent says,

He hates him

That would upon the rack of this tough world  
Stretch him out longer.

Othello, the most sane of the three, is the only one driven to the deed of a lunatic, for Hamlet is justified; and Lear, who is the wildest, hurts nobody. Even Lear's madness is left open to doubt when he is most frenzied. When he is raving with the storm on the heath or when in the fourth Act he comes in fantastically dressed with wild flowers, like Ophelia, he sees the world as it is. Shakespeare cannot have meant pitiless insight to be a sign of Insanity when he gave it to Hamlet and to Lear and to Timon: these men



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were set apart from the World by their greatness and misery and saw it the better because they were apart.

In the Scene in the storm when the Fool says, "Here's a night pities neither wise man nor fool," and "this cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen," five Characters meet (Lear, Kent, Gloucester, the Fool and Edgar) and only one of them is behaving with Sanity, for Edgar is disguised as a madman and Gloucester grows as crazed as the King; he says :

Thou sayest the king grows mad ; I'll tell thee, friend,  
I am almost mad myself : I had a son,  
Now outlawed from my blood ; he sought my life,  
But lately, very late : I loved him, friend,  
No father his son dearer : truth to tell thee,  
The grief hath crazed my wits. What a night's this !

Edgar's simulated Insanity is a comment on Lear's natural frenzy. It was congenial to him, for when he appears in the first Act Edmund says : "And pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old Comedy : my cue is villainous melancholy with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam." His disguise was hardly sufficient even in the dark on the heath, for Gloucester says afterwards :

In the last night's storm I such a fellow saw,  
Which made me think a man a worm : my son  
Came then into my mind, and yet my mind  
Was then scarce friends with him.

And the Fool's folly (or simulation of it) matches with Edgar's.

This Fool is the Court-jester of the *Midsummer Comedies*, Touchstone, of whom Celia says in *As You Like It*,

He'll go along o'er the wide world with me,  
and Feste in *Twelfth Night*, whose last song he continues when he sings in the storm,

He that has and a little tiny wit,  
With hey ho ! the wind and the rain !  
Must make content with his fortunes fit,  
For the rain it raineth every day.

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He is a shrewd knave and unhappy and would ask nothing better than to go over the wide world with Cordelia. The Knight says of him, "Since my young Lady's going into France, Sir, the Fool hath much pined away," and Lear answers, "No more of that: I have noted it well." He vanishes in the midst of the Tragedy after the storm, saying, "And I'll go to bed at noon," and there is no more mention of him unless Lear is thinking of him when he says, "And my poor fool is hanged." It may be that as the Play was first written he was faithful to the King to the last and died defending him and Cordelia and this was altered because he had won the hearts of the audience through a natural sympathy and so his disaster would have been too heart-rending though the distant calamities of Kings could be borne. His had been the part of a Chorus, to interpret the Play and keep the audience in touch with Lear's tragedy, and this was no longer required after the storm, for Lear had been broken and the end was in sight.

The storm may be one of the signs that *King Lear*, as we have it, was written after *Macbeth*. I think that it was suggested by the thunder and lightning when Macbeth and his friend saw the Weird Sisters and that it must have been written later because the whole effect is developed. This storm is the more effective because it is a natural one, and it becomes the culminating Scene of the Tragedy, which is made a story told in a storm instead of in the haunted night like *Macbeth*, and is set out of doors instead of in the rooms of a Castle like nearly all the hesitations of *Hamlet*. The King grieves with the raving of the wind in the night. This storm enforces the whole drift of the Play, "Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well." These skies were natural, and so were the passions which devastated Lear and the rest, and this links *King Lear* with the two other supreme Tragedies *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and with two revised after them, *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*: all these are apart from any Creed and not guided by any Devil or Ghost.

King Lear is too loving and generous and great for this

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World. He is so great that he surrenders this World's greatness without giving a thought to it : he only values his Kingdom because he can divide it among the children he loves. This divides him from Macbeth who had sacrificed his soul for a Kingdom ; and his recklessness contrasts him with Hamlet who was made impotent by thinking too much. He towers over these, and even over his only rivals in greatness, Othello and Antony, because they are dominated by women while his love is a father's and only asks to give all. He discovers too late that one of his three children repaid all his devotion, and his faithful Fool might have sung the Song in *As You Like It* to him—

Blow, blow, thou winter wind !  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude.

It may be that Shakespeare left this sorrowful Poem intentionally tangled because its picture of Life gained truth by repeating *Hamlet's* Pantomime method, or that effect may be due to the blending of two juvenile Plays when Andronicus lived reincarnated as Lear. In either case it agrees with the passionate medley of the storm in the night. When Lear, who has been as mad as the vexed Sea, passes out of reach of such storms Kent says,

Vex not his ghost ! O let him pass !

Two of the Tragedies, *Othello* and *Hamlet*, are linked with *King Lear* by the domination of Chance. *Hamlet* was ended by a casual slaughter, and the chance that Edmund's warning was given just too late governed *King Lear*, which otherwise would have been a Tragi-comedy closing in reconciliation and joy, like *Cymbeline*. If Desdemona had not happened to drop the handkerchief while Emilia was with her and if Cassio had not happened to give it to Bianca at once and she had not happened to restore it to him while Othello was watching him, Iago's chief evidence could not have been proffered. And as Mr. Masfield has said, "Had Emilia come a minute sooner or a minute later, the end of the Play would have been very different."

This development of the action of Chance helps to denote

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the order of the Plays it controls. The final chances in *Hamlet* and *King Lear* were foretold by the moods of the Plays and therefore they are not really accidents, and they govern the Tragedy by shaping its end. But the chances in *Othello* control the story throughout, as when the messengers recalling the Moor to Venice and giving his place to Cassio arrive just at the moment when the news will be fatal. These chances are destined because they are the tools of the doom which Desdemona incurred ; but this is disguised till all the story is told : they come as true accidents which prove to be fatal at the end of it all. Othello foretells them when he speaks of his story,

Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances.

In the similar Italian Romance, *Il Capitano Moro*, in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*, the Ancient contrived the theft of the handkerchief, employing his child to steal it for him. If we could be certain that Shakespeare founded this Play on it, the change about this would be one of the proofs that this employment of Chance was deliberate ; but though the Play, as we have it, resembles Cinthio's story there are signs that an earlier form had differed from it. It may be that Shakespeare founded the first form of *Othello* on a Spanish version (which may have been written before Cinthio's) in the days when he wrote *Titus Andronicus* and afterwards made it resemble the Italian one more.

This Play does not seem to have been printed before the Quarto edition of 1622, so we cannot know when he made the final changes in it. If the *Revel's Book* of 1605 is genuine it proves that a Play called *Othello* was acted at Whitehall in 1604. Prince Lewis Frederick of Würtemberg saw a Play of this name at the Globe in 1610. And the Accounts of Money Expended by the Treasurer of the Chamber between Michaelmas 1612 and 1613, prove that a Play called *The Moor of Venice* was acted by His Majesty's Servants during that time. But the *Elegy on Burbage*, who died in 1618, seems to show that the Play as it was printed in 1622 had been changed from the form acted by him. It says of him,

But let me not forget one chiefest part  
Wherein, beyond the rest, he moved the heart,



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The grieved Moor, made jealous by a slave,  
Who sent his wife to fill a timeless grave,  
Then slew himself upon the bloody bed.

This statement that Othello was made jealous by a slave seems supported in the Play as we have it. For instance, Iago says,

Though I am bound to every act and duty,  
I am not bound to all that slaves are free to,

and in the fifth Act Montano says of him,

I'll after that same villain,  
For 'tis a damned slave,

and Othello says of him,

O cursed slave!

and Lodovico says,

O thou Othello, that wert once so good,  
Fallen in the practice of a damned slave,  
What shall be said to thee? . . .

For this slave,  
If there be any cunning cruelty,  
That can torment him much and hold him long,  
It shall be his.

All this can be explained if Iago had begun as a slave and not as an Ancient. And that would explain how his wife was Desdemona's servant, employed, for instance, to lay the sheets on the bed, and not a lady-in-waiting.

Gildon wrote in his *Reflections on Rymer's Short View of Tragedy*, printed in 1694: "I am assured, from very good hands, that the person who acted Iago was in much esteem of a comedian, which made Shakespeare put several words and expressions into his part, perhaps not so agreeable to his character, to make the audience laugh who had not yet learnt to endure to be serious a whole Play." If Iago was partly Comical this may explain why Leonard Digges wrote in his verses prefixed to Benson's edition of Shakespeare's Poems, printed in 1640,

*Sejanus* too was irksome; they prized more  
Honest Iago and the jealous Moor.

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If Shakespeare made this change for Posterity or to please himself and not for the Stage of his own time, this would show that he still worked on his Plays to improve them with no prospect of gain.

In the third Act of Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* there are allusions—

Who calls out murder? Lady, was it you?

and "You shall see me do the Moor: Master, lend me your scarf a little," which may mean that a form of *Othello* was known in 1600 or 1601. The first may refer to Emilia's words after Desdemona calls out, "O falsely, falsely murdered!"

Alas, what cry is that? . . .

Out and alas! that was my lady's voice,

and the other may show that Desdemona was strangled.

Othello's description of the napkin or handkerchief,

There's magic in a web of it:

A sybil that had numbered in the world

The Sun to course two hundred compasses,

In her prophetic fury sewed the work,

now only seems intended to alarm Desdemona, since if this had been true it would have been natural to tell her before. This may show that she was strangled with it before the Play was governed by Chance.

Iago's assertion that the handkerchief is spotted with strawberries may be a sign that Shakespeare had only heard the story told and forgot (or never knew) why a mulberry might have been the badge of the Moor. Mulberries were known then in England: they seem to have been grown first at Sion House by the Thames, and he is said to have planted a mulberry tree in his own garden. So there was no reason why he should have altered the badge if he had remembered that "moro" was the Italian for "mulberry" and also for "Moor."

This double meaning of "moro" explained why Three Mulberries Sable were borne by Cristofano Moro, whom Guicciardini named in the eighth book of his *Storia d'Italia* as besieging Padua in 1509—"Per occultare piu questi

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pensieri, Cristofano Moro, l'altro provveditore, dimostrasse di andare a campo alla terra di Citadella." It is said that Cristofano Moro's wife died while he was Lieutenant of Cyprus in 1508, but beyond this we have no ground for connecting him with Cinthio's story. He was not a Moor; neither was Lodovico il Moro, who seems to have taken his name from his complexion or from the badge he assumed. But if Cinthio based his story on one about Cristofano Moro or some one else bearing that surname, the double meaning might have suggested changing the husband into a Moor. Sir Israel Gollancz writes: "Cinthio's Novel may have been of Oriental origin, and in its general character it somewhat resembles the Tale of the Three Apples in the *Thousand and One Nights*." If Cinthio used that tale the husband's complexion may have been suggested to him by the fact that in it the slave who wrought the mischief was black.

Desdemona's words:

My mother had a maid called Barbara:  
She was in love; and he she loved proved mad  
And did forsake her: she had a song of "Willow";  
An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune,  
And she died singing it,

may have suggested Ophelia's sorrow and death instead of echoing them. And if so, that song may have suggested the willow on which Ophelia leant. The singing which is a sign of distraction in Desdemona and is echoed extravagantly when Emilia says,

I will play the swan,  
And die in music, "Willow, Willow, Willow,"

becomes natural when it is a token of Ophelia's Insanity.

There are traces of early work in this Play, as, for instance, when the Duke says:

When remedies are past, the griefs are ended  
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.  
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone  
Is the next way to draw new mischief on,

beginning a rhyming passage of eighteen lines which is stopped when Brabantio, after saying

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

But words are words ; I never yet did hear  
That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear,

adds, " I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of State." And the Blank Verse is written in four different manners.

It may be that Shakespeare first wrote *Othello* as a Tragical Play in the days when he wrote the first form of *Titus Andronicus*, and rewrote it as *The Moor of Venice* after he wrote *The Merchant of Venice*, giving it a fortunate ending in which Desdemona survived and was reconciled to Othello, for this would help to explain why she speaks after he believes she is dead and why so much of this Tragedy has a Comical mood. The Theatre-goers may have preferred the Tragical close, and this may have been restored in a form which was written before 1600 and revised in 1604 and again when he was not working for the Stage of his time.

This would explain the singular construction. The first Act is a prelude, and the Tragedy begins with the second in a storm, like *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*. This first Act extenuates Othello's behaviour in a way contradicted in the rest of the Tragedy ; for instance, it shows that he did not woo Desdemona till her love was made plain, but in the third Act he says that Cassio had acted as a go-between—" went between us very oft " and

He was of my counsel  
In my whole course of wooing,  
and Desdemona says,

What ! Michael Cassio,  
That came awooing with you, and so many a time  
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly  
Hath ta'en your part ?

This change in the first Act deprives Othello of an obvious reason for being jealous of Cassio who might have played the old part of the treacherous friend the more easily since Othello was black, and it absolves Cassio from the doom which complicity would have made him incur. The first Act seems written to ennoble Othello, and to give a new reason for Iago's behaviour. Iago still says in his soliloquy,



## OTHELLO

I hate the Moor ;  
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets  
He has done my office : I know not if it be true,  
But I for mere suspicion in that kind  
Will do as if for surety.

This impossible wickedness is subordinate here to the motive explained in the beginning when he tells Roderigo that he only follows the Moor to serve his turn upon him because Cassio was promoted instead. After that explanation he said,

Call up her father ;  
Rouse him : make after him, poison his delight,  
Proclaim him in the streets.

This is the first we hear of the marriage, and so far Roderigo's only reason for poisoning Othello's delight is the fact that Iago was not made the Lieutenant. This feeble beginning is in the Tragi-comical method of *The Merchant of Venice*. All the rest of the Tragedies open tragically with the story appearing, but there is nothing in this to indicate the mood of *Othello*.

In the second Act in another soliloquy Iago announces that he loves Desdemona :

Now, I do love her too,  
Not out of absolute lust, though peradventure  
I stand accountant for as great a sin,  
But partly led to diet my revenge,  
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor  
Hath leaped into my seat : the thought whereof  
Doth like a poisonous mineral gnaw my inwards ;  
And nothing can or shall content my soul  
Till I am evened with him, wife for wife,  
Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor  
At least into a jealousy so strong  
That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,  
If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash  
For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,  
I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,  
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb,  
For I fear Cassio with my nightcap, too ;

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Make the Moor thank me, love me and reward me,  
For making him egregiously an ass  
And practising upon his peace and quiet  
Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused :  
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.

This is still Tragi-comical. Iago's intention is to make the Moor a cuckold, "egregiously an ass," in the mood of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and he forgets that he has already said at the end of the first Act in the right vein for a traditional villain,

I have it. It is engendered. Hell and night  
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

There are at least two Iagos, a Tragi-comical one and another whose deliberate wickedness was tempered by Hamlet's introspection and doubts. His praise of his victims may have been first meant as signs of his devilish detestation of goodness. He says of Othello in the first Act,

The Moor is of a free and open nature,  
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,  
and in the second Act,

The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,  
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,  
forgetting that he has just said, "Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies," and even of Cassio he says,

He hath a daily beauty in his life  
That makes me ugly,

though in the Play, as we have it, Cassio's life is not beautiful. The effect now is that this testimony carries more weight because it comes from a foe. But another effect is that Iago keeps contradicting himself. These things are not meant to deceive, for they are said in soliloquies, and if he was sure that Othello was of a constant, loving, noble nature he could not have thought that he had dishonoured him by seducing Emilia. That motive is thrown into the background in the Play, as we have it, like the similar suspicion of Cassio, because

## OTHELLO

Shakespeare decided to ennoble Othello, and the result is that Iago is left like Leontes of whom Paulina says in *The Winter's Tale*,

These dangerous unsafe lunes in the King, beshrew them !

or Ford of whom Mistress Page says in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* : " Why, Woman, your husband is in his old lunes again : he takes on so yonder that any madness I ever yet beheld seemed but tameness, civility and patience to this his distemper." And the Play, as we have it, leaves him without justification for his atrocious revenge.

Iago gives a clue to the meaning of the Play when he says in the first Act, " If sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of Hell, thou shalt enjoy her." He sees his own nature in the innocent girl Desdemona who is as simple as Imogen or as her companion in misfortune, Ophelia. He is the supersubtle Venetian and he shares the calamity of the erring barbarian, for the same irrational jealousy devastates both.

Iago and Othello employ the word " jealousy " as meaning " suspicion," as Malcolm did in the fourth Act of *Macbeth* when he said,

Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,  
for instance, when in the third Act Iago says,

As, I confess, it is my nature's plague  
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy  
Shapes faults that are not,

and Othello says

Thinkest thou, I'd make a life of jealousy,  
To follow still the changes of the Moon  
With fresh suspicions ?

This was why Othello could say that he was not easily jealous ; he was trusting by nature and therefore the more easily fooled. But they were both wrecked by jealousy in our sense of the word.

Desdemona is only a victim of this jealousy now, though as

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the Play was first planned she had, I think, incurred her calamity by deceiving her father and yielding to an unnatural love. Her love is not unnatural now, for Othello's nobility and greatness account for it in spite of his colour; but I think that in the first form of this Tragedy it was meant to be horrible and because it was horrible it ended in horrors. And even these horrors were modified in the Play as we have it.

It is probable that in the first form Iago was a conventional villain as childishly wicked as King Richard the Third, and Othello was a repetition of Aaron, the ghastly Moor in *Titus Andronicus*. Iago has now more in common with Shakespeare's only natural villain, Edmund in *King Lear*, and with Hamlet than with King Richard the Third, and Othello resembles the Prince of Morocco in *The Merchant of Venice*. This may be one of the signs that this Play was rewritten when that Prince was made noble and romantic though black.

Coleridge (according to the *Extracts from his Table Talk*) said: "Othello must not be conceived as a Negro, but as a high and chivalrous Moorish Chief. Shakespeare learned the spirit of the Character from the Spanish Poetry, which was prevalent in England in his time. Jealousy does not strike me as the point in his passion. . . . It was a moral indignation and regret that virtue should so fall—'But yet the pity of it, Iago, O Iago, the pity of it.' In addition to this, his honour was concerned: Iago would not have succeeded but by hinting that his honour was compromised. There is no ferocity in Othello; his mind is majestic and composed." This criticism has only been rivalled by Gervinus' belief that Iago's words

She that in wisdom never was so frail

To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail

asserted that Desdemona was too wise to exchange an evident advantage for a disadvantage, "einen offenbaren Vortheil nicht für einen Nachtheil, einen Lecterbissen nicht für einen Speizerest hinzugeben." And Gervinus had the excuse that he was a foreigner and did not understand Elizabethan vulgarity. Othello is an erring barbarian: he is not a high and chivalrous Moorish Chief, but a Blackamoor, a Negro, and he kills Desdemona with a barbaric ferocity, not with a majestic composure.



## OTHELLO

No one has ever thought that Aaron the Moor was intended to be a chivalrous Chief. He describes himself when he says,

What signifies my deadly-standing eye,  
My silence, and my cloudy melancholy,  
My fleece of woolly hair that now uncurls  
Even as the adder when she doth unroll  
To do some fatal execution ?

His colour is shown when Bassianus says,

Believe me, Queen, your swarth Cimmerian  
Doth make your honour of his body's hue,  
Spotted, detested and abominable,

and when Lavinia says,

Let her enjoy her raven-coloured love.

His child and Tamora's is plainly a Negro: the Stage-direction says, "Enter nurse with a Blackamoor child"; and Aaron says,

Look, look, how the black slave smiles upon his father. . . .  
Come on, you thick-lipped slave, I'll bear you hence.

Lucius says to Aaron,

Say, wall-eyed slave, whither wouldst thou convey  
This growing image of thy fiendlike face ?

and Aaron says,

Coal black is better than another hue  
In that it scorns to bear another hue. . . .  
Let fools do good and fair men call for grace,  
Aaron will have his soul black like his face.

Othello is drawn in the same way: Roderigo says,

What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe  
If he can carry it thus ?

Iago says to Brabantio,

An old black ram  
Is tuppung your white ewe. Arise, arise . . .

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Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,  
Or else the Devil will make a grandsire of you.

Othello says :

Haply for I am black  
And have not those soft parts of conversation  
That chamberers have, or for I am declined  
Into the vale of years, yet that's not much,  
She is gone. . . . Her name that was as fresh  
As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black  
As mine own face.

Desdemona says to him,

And yet I fear you, for you are fatal then  
When your eyes roll so.

Brabantio says of her :

To fall in love with what she feared to look on !  
It is a judgment maimed and most imperfect,  
That will confess perfection so could err  
Against all rules of nature ; and must be driven  
To find out practices of cunning hell,  
Why this should be.

And Iago says to Othello in the third Act,

And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks  
She loved them most . . .  
Foh ! one may smell in such a will most rank,  
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.

In all this there is the same view of blackness as the King takes in *Love's Labour's Lost*, when he says, "Black is the badge of Hell." All this makes Othello more like Aaron than the Prince of Morocco in *The Merchant of Venice*. The Prince is a high and chivalrous Moorish Chief. He begins,

Mislike me not for my complexion,  
The shadowed livery of the burnished Sun,  
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.

## OTHELLO

Portia, though she says of him before he appears, "If he have the condition of a Saint and the complexion of a Devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me," says to him,

If my father had not scanted me  
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself  
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,  
Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair  
As any comer I have looked on yet  
For my affection.

He is as martial as Othello: he says to her,

By this scimitar  
That slew the Sophy and a Persian Prince,  
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,  
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,  
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth.

None the less Portia, after he has failed and departed, says,

A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.  
Let all of his complexion choose me so.

She shared the reluctance of Claribel in *The Tempest*, who, when she married the King of Tunis, was "weighed between loathness and obedience"; and that marriage was considered unnatural, for all the Courtiers knelt to Alonzo and importuned otherwise. Still, such marriages as this had been common in Mediæval Romances, and they were known in Spanish History too, as when in 712 King Roderick's widow, Egilona, married his Arab conqueror's son, Abd-el-Aziz. And Antony's love for Cleopatra was natural, though she said that she was "through Phœbus' amorous pinches black." Shakespeare may not have known that Cleopatra was probably less swarthy than Antony, or he may have meant her darkness to be a part of her charm.

Perhaps he meant the Prince of Morocco to have a dusky complexion. In Edmond Howe's *Annals* there is an account of a pageant which "the gentlemen of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn acted on Shrove Monday Night, 1613, in honour of the Princess Elizabeth's marriage," and it tells how

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they marched from Chancery Lane to Whitehall by the Strand, some of them "in an antic or mock-masque of baboons," and others "the chief Masquers, with great state in white Indian habit or like the great Princes of Barbary . . . their vizards were of olive colour ; their hair long and black down to their shoulders."

In the Play, as we have it, Othello is a Barbary Moor, and thinks of returning to Mauritania (according to Iago) and boasts a Royal descent. This may have been a change made when he was altered to resemble the Prince ; but he still has a sooty bosom, like Aaron, as Brabantio says. The people of Mauritania were then supposed to be black. For instance, Ben Jonson wrote in the *Masque of Blackness*,

Black Mauritania first and secondly  
Swarth Lusitania, next we did descry  
Rich Aquitania.

In that Masque, which was "personated at the Court at Whitehall on Twelfth Night, 1605," blackness was praised : Niger, who is seen "in form and colour of an Æthiop," said of his daughters,

In their black the perfectest beauty grows,  
and Queen Anne of Denmark and eleven of her ladies appeared as Negro Nymphs. In this they were imitating the ladies of King Henry the Eighth's Court who (according to Edward Hall's *Chronicle of England*) took part in a Masque in 1509, "their faces, necks, arms and hands covered with fine pleasaunce black ; some call it Lumbardynes, which is marvellous thin, so that the same ladies seem to be nigrost or Black-moors." In those days there would have been nothing contemptible in a Negro Othello, any more than there was anything absurd in the grant of two Demi-Moors or Demi-Negroes as Supporters in Heraldry.

Othello is left childishly credulous and suddenly savage, every inch a Negro, in spite of the stateliness borrowed from the Prince of Morocco. Indeed, he became a true Negro instead of an impossible one like Aaron, in the same way as Shylock became a real Jew instead of the bugbear of the Traditional Stage. He could have said with Aaron,



## OTHELLO

I am a lamb : but if you brave the Moor,  
The chafed boar, the mountain lioness,  
The Ocean swells not so as Aaron storms,

but even this national savagery in him is extenuated when he is made an epileptic, like Cæsar. When he falls in a trance in the fourth Act Iago says,

My lord is fallen into an epilepsy :  
This is the second fit ; he had one yesterday,

though there has been nothing said before about this. When Cassio says, " Rub him about the temples," he replies,

No, forbear,  
The lethargy must have his quiet course :  
If not, he foams at the mouth, and by and by  
Breaks out to savage madness.

Immediately after this he rouses Othello, using this means to make him savagely mad.

A similar extenuation is visible in the method of murder if those students who think that Othello smothered his wife are right, but this may be a mistake. In the Play, as we have it, the Stage-direction says only " he stifles her." After this he says,

Not dead ? not yet quite dead ?  
I that am cruel am yet merciful ;  
I would not have thee linger in thy pain :  
So, so.

It may be that the Stage-direction is wrong or misinterpreted, and that he had tried to strangle her and then stabbed her, for this would account for her speaking afterwards, which she could not have done if she had been smothered or strangled. The *Elegy on Burbage* says that the Moor " slew himself upon the bloody bed." Othello says in the third Act, " I will tear her all to pieces," and " O blood, blood, blood ! " and

Even so my bloody thoughts with violent pace  
Shall ne'er look back,

and in the fourth Act,

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I will be found most cunning in my patience ;  
But—dost thou hear ?—most bloody.

When Iago says to him

Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed,  
he replies “ Good, good, the justice of it pleases.” In the fifth Act, he says,

Forth of my heart, those charms, thine eyes are blotted :  
Thy bed lust-stained shall with lust’s blood be spotted.

Afterwards he says,

Yet I’ll not shed her blood  
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,

but this cannot prove that he does not stab her after failing to strangle her, and apart from the Stage-direction there is nothing to show that he did not strangle her as he had intended to do. He says at the end,

There lies your niece,  
Whose breath indeed these hands have newly stopped :  
I know this act shows horrible and grim.

This may have been the core of the Tragedy, white Desdemona strangled by an elderly Negro’s huge black hands.

Even this horror is softened in the Play, as we have it, for if the bed was in a curtained recess it must have been at the back of the Stage and Desdemona must have been hidden while Othello was strangling her, instead of being killed openly as in Cinthio’s version, according to which she was beaten to death. This would have made her death like Agamemnon’s (in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus), where he calls out, “ Woe’s me ! I am stricken a mortal blow within ” ; and the Chorus says, “ Hush ! who is it that cries out ‘ a blow,’ mortally wounded ? ”

The miracle in this Play is the fact that the sympathy is all with Othello. This triumph is increased by the fact that he is a Negro and a horrible one, rolling his eyes and gnawing his lips. Young Desdemona is a victim destroyed by his Tragedy and not a protagonist, and Iago, who is aged twenty-eight, about the same age as Edmund in *King Lear* or a little

## THE THEME OF THE TRAGEDIES

older, is a tempter controlled by envy, malice and hatred. The Tragedy is entirely Othello's, and he towers over all the everyday World. He is like the Negro of whom Wordsworth wrote afterwards :

Thy friends are exultations, agonies,  
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

Five of the Tragedies, *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Othello*, are Revenge-Plays of the kind which was popular when Shakespeare was young. In all of these, except *Julius Cæsar*, which was founded on Plutarch, there is a strain of fantastic humour and a foundation of cruelty in a story of crime. It would have seemed a sign of perversity if Shakespeare had chosen the extenuation of Murder as his Tragical theme when he was strongest ; but that would be explained if he turned to rewrite stories of horror which had been congenial to him when he had the mind of a boy. In the same way as he had made Lavinia exclaim in *Titus Andronicus*,

Do this and be a charitable murderer,

he made Othello describe himself as "an honourable murderer,"

For naught I did in hate, but all in honour.

Brutus, too, was an honourable murderer,

He only in a general honest thought  
And common good to all, made one of them ;

so was Hamlet, who only slaughters Polonius by mistake and is justified in killing the King in retaliation apart from the duty of avenging his father. And though this cannot be said of Macbeth his crimes are extenuated because the Weird Sisters or Witches had encouraged his purpose.

Even the callous villains were given an excuse for their crimes : Edmund avenges his mother's wrongs and his own when he punishes his father's adultery in *King Lear*, and Iago was either avenging his own dishonour or demented enough to suspect the Moor without cause. It does not follow from this that Shakespeare believed that every crime could be

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palliated : this was merely his method in constructing these Plays ; it was his aim to secure some sympathy for each of his Characters. This separates them from the young ignorance of *Titus Andronicus* as well as from the true picture of Crime by the forgotten master of the Drama who wrote *Arden of Feversham*.

In three of these Plays, *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Othello*, a Tragedy in the manner of Æschylus soars above pedestrian work. I do not infer from this that Shakespeare was copying Æschylus, for I take it that the resemblance is due only to the fact that they both reached the greatest heights of the Drama. So, too, I do not infer that he borrowed the last Scene of *The Winter's Tale* from the *Alcestis*, or that when he wrote, for instance,

Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneal'd,

he remembered that there were many similar lines in the Greek Poets, such as,

ἀκλαντος, ἄφιλος, ἀνυμέναιος,

in the *Antigone* : he wrote in this way because it was the best way to write. Besides, in this instance (as in "cabined, cribbed, confined," in *Macbeth*) the three words all meant the same thing.

These Plays were successful on the Stage of his time because the pedestrian work in them enabled the audience to tolerate the flaming emotion. Even in English the *Agamemnon* would have been Greek to people who could delight in *Macbeth*. Though the most popular of his Tragedies, *Hamlet*, resembled the Greek Tragedies most in its theme (which was an accident since the legend was Danish), it resembled them least in its nature, partly because the Prince had no trace of the Greek severity and partly because his varying moods were in unison with the shifts of a Pantomime. The Play which had least in common with them in its original theme, the atrocity of a horrible Negro, resembled them most when it was finished : *Othello* is seen like a Laocoon, he is crushed by a snake and Desdemona is dwarfed as Laocoon's sons are in the group which (though it is later work) is a Greek Tragedy repeated in stone. This resemblance is increased



## ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

by the changes which left Othello governed by Chance. The culminating chances in it have the effect of an implacable Destiny. Othello could have said at the end as did Gloucester in *King Lear*,

As flies to wanton boys are we to the Gods,  
They kill us for their sport,

or as Florizel did in *The Winter's Tale*,

But as the unthought-on accident is guilty  
To what we wildly do, so we profess  
Ourselves to be the slaves of Chance, and flies  
Of every wind that blows.

*Antony and Cleopatra*, the Tragedy printed next by Heminge and Condell, is separated from these, and so are two others, *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*: these three are not Murder Plays or Revenge Plays, they are not governed by Mischance or by Destiny, and they are massively Roman. This contrast may show that they were divided from the rest by an interval. It may be that Shakespeare was exhausted for a time by the agonies of *Lear* and *Othello* and turned to quieter work, including a revision of *Troilus and Cressida* which inspired him to write the Tragedy of the Emperor Antony.

Though *Antony and Cleopatra* does not seem to have been printed before 1623, the Stationers' Register shows that Edward Blunt obtained a Licence to print a Play of that name in 1608. If we can take this as proving that a version of *Antony and Cleopatra* was acted in 1607 or 1608 this would agree with an interval of three or four years between a form of *Othello* and the completion of a form of this Tragedy. This seems to me the only Play written slowly with deliberate labour: I think that after Shakespeare had turned to other work he attempted to make this Tragedy his greatest and wrote it in seclusion and peace. This would help to account for the dignity and calm in the telling of this story of Passion.

The subject had been familiar to him for many years, for besides its treatment by Plutarch it had been used in the Countess of Pembroke's translation of Garnier's *Marc*

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

*Antoine* in 1592 and Samuel Daniel's Play, *Cleopatra*, in 1594 and Samuel Brandon's *Tragi-comedy of the Virtuous Octavia* in 1598. And it came to his mind in other Plays, as, for instance, when he made *Macbeth* say :

There is none but he  
Whose being I do fear, and under him  
My genius is rebuked ; as, it is said,  
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar,

and when in *Cymbeline* he made *Iachimo* say of *Imogen's* room :

It was hanged  
With tapestry of silk and silver ; the story  
Proud *Cleopatra*, when she met her Roman,  
And *Cydnus* swelled above the banks, or for  
The press of boats or pride : a piece of work  
So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive  
In workmanship and value ; which I wondered  
Could be so rarely and exactly wrought,  
Since the true life on it was.

In the same way as he had crowned the happy Plays of his Youth with *Romeo and Juliet*, a sorrowful poem of the innocent love of children, he made this Tragedy of elderly Passion the climax of the work of his manhood. And he changed *Plutarch's* story to make his last Tragical lovers elderly.

North's version of *Plutarch's* Life of *Antonius*, says of *Cleopatra* : "Cæsar and Pompey knew her when she was but a young thing, and knew not then what the World meant ; but now she went to *Antonius* at the age when a woman's beauty is at the prime, and she also of the best judgment." And her age is stated afterwards, "*Cleopatra* died, being eight-and-thirty years old, after she had reigned two-and-twenty years, and governed about fourteen of them with *Antonius*. And for *Antonius*, some say that he lived three-and-fifty years and others say six-and-fifty." According to this, *Cleopatra* was about twenty-four when *Antony's* enslavement began. In the Play she says of herself in the first Act that she is "wrinkled deep in time," and in the second Act *Pompey* says of her,

## ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

But all the charms of love,  
Salt Cleopatra, soften thy waned lip!

and Enobarbus says of her,

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale  
Her infinite variety.

This increase of her age rendered the survival of charm part of her witchcraft, and left all the story one of lovers embracing at a time when they knew Love must be brief.

This was a deliberate change, and so was the omission of Antony's solitude in a house in the Sea. Plutarch tells how after the Battle of Actium Antonius "forsook the city and company of his friends, and built him a house in the Sea, by the Isle of Pharos, upon certain forced mounts which he caused to be cast into the Sea, and dwelt there, as a man who had banished himself from all men's company, saying that he would lead Timon's life, because he had the like wrong offered him that was before offered unto Timon, and that for the unthankfulness of those he had done good unto and whom he took to be his friends, he was angry with all men and would trust no man." This was left out because it would have hampered the Tragedy and because Antony trusted others still to the end.

Some other changes are incidents developed from hints. Plutarch only says, "With Antonius in Italy there was a Soothsayer or Astronomer of Egypt, who warned him that his fortune would be always obscured by Cæsar's, 'for thy *Demon*,' said he, '(that is to say, the good angel and spirit that keepeth thee) is afraid of his; and being courageous and high when he is alone, becometh fearful and timorous when he cometh near unto the other.'" Out of this Shakespeare made the Scene in which the Soothsayer warns Charmian and Iras while they are jesting together:

You shall be more believing than beloved . . .  
You shall outlive the lady whom you serve.

His warnings sound like a knell, and their young laughter passes out of the Play when Cleopatra says of Antony,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

He was disposed to mirth ; but on the sudden  
A Roman thought hath struck him.

These jests in the first Act and the Scene in the second in which the fuddled solemnity of Lepidus echoes a like Scene in *Othello*, and the talk of the Clown who brings the figs in the fifth Act are the only approaches to a Comic relief and, with the Porter's speech in *Macbeth*, they are dominated by the mood of the Tragedy. This distinguishes this Play and *Macbeth* from *Hamlet* and *King Lear* and *Othello* in which Comedy broke the tension with laughter. Here the Roman thoughts govern the merriment.

There is only one change which may have been a mistake, and that is when the soldier has heard the music at night and says,

'Tis the God Hercules, whom Antony loved,  
Now leaves him.

It is possible that Shakespeare remembered that Antonius had been devoted to Hercules and had wished to resemble him and so misunderstood the words, "Now such as in reason sought the depth of the interpretation of this wonder, thought that it was the god unto whom Antonius bore singular devotion to counterfeit and resemble him, that did forsake them." But it may be that he knew that this god was Bacchus and found the other more fit for such a Tragical moment. If so, this change would be significant, for Plutarch had shown Antonius turning to the worship of Bacchus but Shakespeare drew him a Hercules subdued by a woman. And he may have remembered the *Hercules Ætaeus* of Seneca and the words,

In astra missus fertur et nubes vago  
Spargit cruore

when he made Antony say,

The shirt of Nessus is upon me : teach me,  
Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage :  
Let me lodge Lichas on the horns of the Moon,  
And with those hands that grasped the heaviest club  
Subdue my worthiest self.



## ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

It so happened that Plutarch was lifted by a Poetical impulse in his *Life of Antonius*. At other times he wrote of him coldly. Still, he remembered that Antonius boasted himself a friend of the Greeks, and besides, the tale was vivid to him because his home, Chaeronea, had known Antonius' kindness and his tyranny after it and because his grandfather Lamprias remembered those things and had heard the revels described. And he wrote the story dramatically, as he showed when he heralded it in his *Life of Demetrius*, "Now that the Macedonian hath played his part, give the Roman also leave to come upon the Stage."

Cleopatra's Macedonian descent attracted him also, and he dealt with her story in the same way. For instance, when he described her behaviour at the Battle of Actium he wrote: "Howbeit the battle was yet of even hand, and the victory doubtful, being indifferent to both, when suddenly they saw the three-score ships of Cleopatra busily about their yard-masts and hoisting sail to fly. So they fled through the midst of them that were in fight, for they had been placed behind the great ships and did marvellously disorder the other ships." And he added, quoting a saying which he had ascribed to Marcus Cato the Censor in his *Life of him*, "Then Antonius showed plainly that he had not only lost the courage and heart of an Emperor, but also of a valiant man; and that he was not his own man (proving that true which an old man spake in mirth, 'that the soul of a lover lived in another's body and not in his own'), he was so carried away with the vain love of this woman, as if he had been glued unto her, and that she could not have removed without moving of him also. For when he saw Cleopatra's ships under sail, he forgot, forsook and betrayed them that fought for him." Horace seemed to agree with Plutarch's view of her flight when he wrote,

Mentemque lymphatam Mareotico  
Redegit in veros timores  
Cæsar.

But Dio in the fortieth Book of his *Roman History* said that on the eve of the battle she had persuaded Antonius to join her in flight because she was dismayed by the omens

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

and that Octavius was aware of their purpose. On other points Dio treated Cleopatra more harshly than Plutarch did. For instance, he wrote in the next Book of his History that her greed and her desire were insatiable (*ἄπληστος μὲν Ἀφροδίτης ἀπληστος δὲ χρημάτων γενομένη*) and that she sent Antonius news of her death, hoping that he would kill himself when he heard it, and that she tried to enthrall Octavius Cæsar in turn.

Plutarch wrote: "Antonius being thus inclined, the last and extremest mischief of all other (to wit, the love of Cleopatra) lighted on him, who did waken and stir up many vices yet hidden in him, and were never seen to any, and if any goodness and hope of rising were left with him, Cleopatra quenched it straight and made it worse than before." But he said that she sent Antonius the news of her death because she was afraid of his fury and that when she received Octavius she had been lying "upon a little low bed in poor estate," and "suddenly rose up naked in her smock, and fell down at his feet, marvellously disfigured: both for that she had plucked the hair from her head, as for also that she had martyred all her face with her nails, and, besides, her voice was small and trembling, her eyes sunk into her head with continual blubbering."

Shakespeare ennobled Plutarch's haughty Antonius and made his wild Cleopatra the greatest picture of a passionate woman. Unlike Plutarch, he made Antony's disastrous surrender to Cleopatra exalt him to a greater nobility.

The note of disgust which had been morbid in Hamlet and frenzied in Lear is to be found in this Play, though most of the Editors have partly disguised it by following Warburton in altering the First Folio's word "dung" into "dug" in the passage in the fifth Act in which Cleopatra says,

It is great  
To do that thing that ends all other deeds;  
Which shackles accidents and bolts up change;  
Which sleeps, and never palates more the dung,  
The beggar's nurse and Cæsar's.

There is no excuse for this alteration, for in the first Act Antony says to her,

## ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Kingdoms are clay : our dungy earth alike  
Feeds beast as man,

and in *The Winter's Tale* Antigonus says,

We need no grave to bury honesty :  
There is not a grain of it the face to sweeten  
Of the whole dungy earth,

and in the fourth Act of *Timon of Athens* Timon says of the Earth :

Common mother, thou,  
Whose womb immeasurable and infinite breast  
Teems and feeds all.

And this has been recognized by some of the German students, for instance Baudissin, who wrote in his *Antonius und Cleopatra*,

Was Schlaf ist und nicht nach dem Kot mehr hungert  
Der Bettler und Cäsaren grossgenährt.

This Play begins,

Nay but this dotage of our General's  
O'er flows the measure . . .

You shall see in him  
The triple pillar of the World transformed  
Into a strumpet's fool.

But Antony answers this,

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch  
Of the ranged Empire fall ! Here is my space.  
Kingdoms are clay : our dungy earth alike  
Feeds beast as man : the nobleness of Life  
Is to do thus ; when such a mutual pair,  
And such a twain can do it.

When in the dotage of Love he "kisses away Kingdoms and Provinces," he cannot stoop to be the King of the World. Crowns are "immoment toys" to him then, and he turns from his victories to conquer himself in the high Roman fashion. And Cleopatra is an Empress no more,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

No more, but even a woman, and commanded  
By such poor passion as the maid that milks  
And does the meanest chares.

This noble Play is the World's greatest Poem of Love,

A piece of work  
So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive  
In workmanship and value; which I wondered  
Could be so rarely and exactly wrought,  
Since the true life on it was.

This Play is the last Tragedy in the Folio Order, for the Play printed after it, *Cymbeline*, was left Tragi-comical; but I think that two others which are Roman in build (though one of them is Greek in its scene), *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*, as we have them, were written several years after this triumph. There is a bleak light in these Plays and the mood of a man who has begun to be old. Perhaps Shakespeare could have said of himself as Timon did of the Senators,

These old fellows . . .  
'Tis lack of kindly warmth, they are not kind :  
And Nature as it grows again toward Earth  
Is fashioned for the journey, dull and heavy.

Coriolanus is austere in his love : even his mother says to him,

Thou hast never in thy life  
Showed thy dear mother any courtesy ;  
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,  
Has clucked thee to the wars, and safely home,

giving new life to Plutarch's words, "besides thou hast not hitherto showed thy poor mother any courtesy." And Timon is austere in his rage. Though he echoes Lear when he says,

Strike me the counterfeit matron :  
It is her habit only that is honest ;  
Herself's a bawd,



## CORIOLANUS

his savage indignation is Roman. He is a Roman Lear and resembles Coriolanus more than the King.

*Coriolanus* does not seem to have been printed before the Folio of 1623. Its title page said of it, "the whole history exactly followed, and many of the principal speeches copied from the life of Coriolanus in Plutarch," but there are two changes in this accurate copy.

Coriolanus brought his doom on himself in Plutarch's version : " He was so cholerick and impatient, that he would yield to no living creature, which made him churlish, uncivil, and altogether unfit for any man's conversation. Yet men marvelling much at his constancy, that he was never overcome with pleasure nor money, and how he would endure easily all manner of pains and travails : therefore they well liked and commended his stoutness and temperancy. But for all that, they could not be acquainted with him as one citizen useth to be with another in the city : his behaviour was so unpleasant to them by reason of a certain insolent and stern manner he had, which because he was too lordly was disliked. . . . And as for other, the only respect that made them valiant was that they hoped to have honour : but touching Martius, the only thing that made him to love honour was the joy he saw his mother did take of him. For he thought nothing made him so happy and honourable, as that his mother might hear everybody praise and commend him, that she might always see him return with a crown upon his head and that she might still embrace him with tears running down her cheeks for joy." According to Plutarch, he only married to please her, " did not only content himself to rejoice and honour her, but at her desire, took a wife also, by whom he had two children and yet never left his mother's house therefore." This love for his mother, the only gentle quality in a man who was stern and insolent to every one else and so proud that he only valued fame for her sake, is the root of his tragedy, according to Plutarch ; but Shakespeare lays little stress on this preparation for the culminating Scene when that love conquers his rage. In Plutarch's version the People honoured him in spite of his pride and only refused him the Consulship when they saw him surrounded by the Senate and Nobility, "fearing to

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

put this office of sovereign authority into his hands . . . as one they might doubt would take away altogether the liberty from the People." In Shakespeare's version all this is changed, and Coriolanus is justified by the ingratitude of the cowardly Mob, "the mutable and rank-scented many."

He can hardly have thought that Menenius Agrippa's speech (which he imitated from Plutarch) was a logical argument, for there would have been as much sense in calling the People the belly and the Senate the head, and in any case the conclusion should be that the whole body should be equally treated. So his use of it seems one of the signs of a deliberate attitude. In this Play as in *Julius Cæsar* the Mob (Seneca's *Fluctu magis mobile vulgus*) is the "common cry of curs." He may have remembered Essex (who had intended to march against London till he was dissuaded from that by his second stepfather Christopher Blunt and by Southampton), when he still wrote in the mood of Marullus' speech to the Mob. This is one of the three Tragedies without magical charm, and this may be a sign that he wrote a version of it when forms of the two others, *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*, were written under the shadow of the Essex Revolt, for this would explain why it keeps the structure of the Chronicle Pageant. That form may have been the second, for the Folio Order suggests that he had written another when he was young, perhaps about 1593 before he revised *Titus Andronicus*.

If we could be certain that he wrote *Coriolanus* first in the time suggested by its manner which links it with the last Tragi-comedies we could infer that the difference in his treatment of Plutarch indicates a waning of interest or a failure of health. But if he merely rewrote a Play which had been written in imitation of Marlowe that difference may be due to this fact.

I think that after he wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* he rested because he had attained his ambition and knew that he could never surpass or equal that Tragedy and that he revised other work from time to time afterwards but never toiled with that passionate emotion again. This may be enough to account for the coldness which sets *Coriolanus* apart.

## TIMON OF ATHENS

*Timon of Athens* does not seem to have been printed before the Folio of 1623; but it is patently founded on a juvenile Play. The story was familiar to Shakespeare when he was young, as he showed when he wrote in *Love's Labour's Lost*,

To see great Hercules whipping a gig,  
And critic Timon laugh at idle toys,

and he could have found it in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, or in Matteo Boiardo's *Il Timone* or in Lucian's *Dialogue on Timon the Man-hater*. as well as in North's version of Plutarch.

The introduction of Alcibiades seems to show that this Play was suggested by the Life of Antonius. Plutarch wrote in that Life: "This Timon was a citizen of Athens that lived about the War of Peloponnesus, as appeareth by Plato and Aristophanes' Comedies, in which they mocked him, calling him a viper and malicious man unto mankind, to shun all other men's companies, but the company of young Alcibiades, a bold and insolent youth, whom he would greatly feast and make much of and kissed him very gladly. Apemantus, wondering at it, asked him the cause what he meant to make much of that young man alone, and to hate all others. Timon answered him, 'I do it,' said he, 'because I know that one day he shall do great mischief to the Athenians.'"

Alcibiades appears to be the first sketch of Coriolanus. Plutarch bracketed their Lives and compared them, so Shakespeare may have been led to the Roman when he wrote of the Greek. But he made little use of Plutarch's Alcibiades (who was "undoubtedly always too licentious and loosely given," and was banished from Athens for deriding the Gods), when he drew the hero who says,

Sound to this coward and lascivious town  
Our terrible approach. . . .  
Till now you have gone on and filled the time  
With all licentious measure.

It may be that the first form of *Timon of Athens* suggested a form of *Coriolanus* written in Youth. These Plays are now linked by a contrast, for, as Mr. Masefield has said,



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"Timon of Athens is betrayed by an excessive generosity. Coriolanus is betrayed by an excessive contempt for the multitude." And this excess links these Plays with the other Tragedies of the dotage of Strength.

The fact that Heminge and Condell printed *Timon of Athens* before *Julius Cæsar* is discounted because the arrangement of the Folio proves that they only put it there as an afterthought. Still, they might have been partly guided by knowing that a form of this Play had been written about 1600. It would have been timely when Essex was behaving like Timon, raging alone and deserted by many who had flattered him once. Mr. Simpson contended that *Satiromastix* referred to a recent form of this Play. *Satiromastix* may have referred to a farcical Play called *Timon* which seems to have been written about 1600 and was printed in 1842. That Play seems to have been one of the onslaughts in the War of the Poets. Some students have thought that it was a travesty of *Cynthia's Revels*, which was acted in 1600, because two of its Characters resembled Ben Jonson's Amorphus and Asotus, but this may only show that these Comedies caricatured the same men. This farce may have been intended to travesty Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, and if so, this may indicate that a form of that Tragedy had been recently acted by the Chamberlain's Servants. But if a version of *Timon of Athens* was performed in those days it could not have been the Play as we have it, for the manner and mood of the noble parts of it prove that they were written after Shakespeare had reached the height of his power.

The last form, or the beginning of one, seems suggested by the account of the solitude of a house in the Sea which Shakespeare omitted when he transformed Plutarch's Life of Antonius. He explained this last form when he made the Poet assert,

I have, in this rough work, shaped out a man,  
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug  
With amplest entertainment. . . .  
When Fortune in her shift and change of mood  
Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants



## TIMON OF ATHENS

Which laboured after him to the mountain's top  
Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,  
Not one accompanying his declining foot.

This sketch remains rough and the present form of the Play suggests that Heminge and Condell found the new fragment written over the old one or interleaved with it and retained passages which would have been altered if the task had been finished.

*Timon of Athens* seems a noble fragment erected on a juvenile Play which had been already revised. The fact that this fragment is only roughly begun in Shakespeare's last manner may indicate that Death cut it short. Even as we have it, Mr. Dowden has called it the climax of Shakespeare's Tragical work.

Heminge and Condell did not perceive that Timon had recited his Epitaph, and so when they did not find it repeated in the last Scene, they inserted the two given by Plutarch. The Epitaph which Timon had written for his tomb by the Sea was :

Timon hath made his everlasting mansion  
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood ;  
Who once a day with his embossed froth  
The turbulent surge shall cover.



## THE LAST TRAGI-COMEDIES

Heminge and Condell printed seven of the Plays as Histories, and Shakespeare left seven as mature Tragedies, not counting the fragment of *Timon of Athens*. If these Tragedies alone had survived he would have been known to us as Æschylus and Sophocles are, since each can only be studied in seven plays out of many. And the metrical tests seem to show that after 1603 he wrote or rewrote seven other Plays, *Measure for Measure*, *Pericles*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest* and *Cymbeline*. These Plays are under the shadow of his Tragical mood, and only one of them, *The Tempest*, was left really finished. In the same way as he wrote his Chronicle Pageant halfheartedly while his true bent was to his *Midsummer Dreams* he worked on all the rest of these Plays with a flagging hand and an early failure of interest.

Only two of these Plays, *Pericles* and *Troilus and Cressida*, seem to have been printed during his life. Simon Forman's Diary proves that *The Winter's Tale* was performed at the Globe in 1611 and mentions *Cymbeline* also, and the Treasurer's Accounts show that *The Tempest* was acted at Court in 1613. If the Revels Books of 1605 are genuine they furnish a proof that *Measure for Measure* was acted at Court in 1604, and there are several allusions to *Pericles* about this time, but we know nothing of *All's Well that Ends Well*.

Four of these Plays, *Pericles*, *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well that Ends Well* and *The Tempest*, almost agree with the definition which Fletcher took from Guarini in his Address to the Reader prefixed to the *Faithful Shepherdess*: "A Tragi-comedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no Tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no Comedy, which must be a representation of familiar people, with such kind of trouble as no life be questioned, so that a God is lawful in them as in a Tragedy and mean

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people as in a Comedy." Two of the others, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, have bloodshed in them and are fantastic Romances which can only be called Tragi-comedies because they have the chief note of that kind of Play in the fact that they have a right to the name *All's Well that Ends Well*. One of them, *Troilus and Cressida*, is a Tragedy told satirically or a Comical Tragedy, and can only be called a Tragi-comedy because the two kinds of Play are blended in it.

The rules which Fletcher had imported from Italy were alien to Shakespeare, and so was the distinction perceived by Aristotle's definite mind. If he had read Aristotle in a translation he could have defended his use of contradictory Episodes by citing, "Bad Poets compose such pieces by their own fault; good Poets to please the Players." But in that case he would have admitted that he was pleasing himself since he had learnt how to employ contrasted Scenes on the Stage. His Tragi-comedies were English and sprang from the Traditional Stage, as was shown, for instance, when Sidney wrote in 1581 in the *Apology for Poesy*: "But, besides these gross absurdities, how all their Plays be neither right Tragedies nor right Comedies, mingling Kings and Clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the Clowns by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their mongrel Tragi-comedy obtained. I know Apuleius did somewhat so, but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment: and I know the Ancients have one or two examples of Tragi-comedies, as Plautus hath *Amphytrio*. But if we mark them well, we shall find that they never, or very daintily, match hornpipes and funerals." When Shakespeare matched hornpipes with funerals, as the Players did when they dissipated the gloom of a Tragedy by dancing a jig when it was over, he followed the old ways which were natural to him because he was English. These Tragi-comedies were a fitting conclusion to the work of his life since a Tragi-comical vein ran through it all.

It is probable that one of his reasons for turning to them



## MASQUES

was the fact that he still had to be guided by the popular taste. The new Court had set an old fashion by reviving the Masques which had fallen into disfavour in Queen Elizabeth's time because she was too proud to take part in them, and new dramatists had established a foreign Tragi-comical mode.

The Court Masques or Mummeries seem to have been imported from France where light-hearted Kings and their Courtiers acted in them as little children pretend to be savages or dangerous animals. According to Froissart they were brought to the French Court in 1393 from Orthez when Yvain de Foix planned the fatal Dance of the Satyrs. And in England this pastime was enthroned in the golden days of King Henry the Eighth, when that Merry Monarch delighted in Wine and Women and Song. For instance, George Cavendish, in his *Life of Cardinal Wolsey*, wrote of the Revels at Hampton Court: "I have seen the King come in a Masque, with a dozen of other Masquers, all in garments like Shepherds, made of fine cloth of gold and fine Crimson satin paned and caps of the same, with vizors of good proportion of visnomy: their hairs and beards either of fine gold wire or else of silver and some being of black silk."

The Court Masques of King James' time were founded on these and on the popular Pageants which were acted, for instance, by the Londoners when Katharine of Aragon and Anne Bullen and King Henry the Eighth's daughters passed through the City on their way to be Crowned. Ben Jonson wrote a Pageant described as "Part of the King's Entertainment in passing to his Coronation, with Scenes to be acted at Fenchurch, Temple Bar and in the Strand" and a Masque called "a Particular Entertainment of the Queen and Prince their Highness at Althorpe, which was performed on the twenty-fifth of June 1603 as they came first into the Kingdom," and another called "a Private Entertainment of the King and Queen on Mayday in the Morning in 1604." The new Queen liked these so well that she employed him to write others for her, for instance, the *Queen's Masque of Blackness*, "presented at the Court at Whitehall on the Twelfth Night, 1605," in which she

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took the part of Euphoris, one of the Masquers, "which were twelve Nymphs, Negros and the daughters of Niger."

Four of Shakespeare's last Tragi-comedies, *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, have Masques (as *Love's Labour's Lost* had), and so has *Timon of Athens*. These may have been more important than they seem to us now, for the Masques of that time were settings for dumb-shows; the words spoken or sung introduced the dancers or pageants. For instance, the Masque of the Amazons in *Timon of Athens* could have lasted as long as the audience wanted to see the Amazons dance. We cannot be certain that he wrote any of these Masques or the similar introduction of Hymen in *As You Like It*, since the Masques and dumb-shows in *Pericles* may be a survival from an earlier form and the other Plays do not seem to have been printed before 1623. Still, even if they were added by other hands because they were popular, they show that these Plays, as we have them, were influenced by the taste of this time. And the revival of the Masques at the Court helped to establish the similar falsity of Beaumont and Fletcher's Tragi-comical Plays.

Fletcher's first Play, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, imitated Battista Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*, which was written about 1586 in rivalry with Torquato Tasso's *Aminta*, written about 1572 and printed in 1581. These Pastorals were Italian in mood and seem to have sprung from Poliziano's *Favola d'Orfeo*, written about 1471, and Agostino Beccari's *Sacrifizio*, written about 1554. Though the *Pastor Fido* was printed in Italian in 1590 and the *Aminta* in English in the following year, when it was translated as the Countess of Pembroke's *Ivychurch* by Abraham Fraunce, they do not seem to have been copied in England before George Daniel wrote his *Queen's Arcadia*, printed in 1605. This may have been due to the fact that Sidney's *Arcadia* had followed the French Pastoral convention derived through Montemayor's *Diana* from Boccaccio's *Ameto*.

This Italian Pastoral mood was even more alien to England than the French one had been, and *The Faithful Shepherdess* failed. But when Fletcher began working with Beaumont about 1607 he turned from Guarini to imitate the fashion begun by the *Tragi-comædia de Calisto y Melibea*, afterwards

## LAST TRAGI-COMEDIES

called *La Celestina*, a long Play or Novel in dialogue which seems to have been written by Fernando de Rojas and was printed in 1499. The Plays ascribed to Beaumont and Fletcher in the Folio of 1647 were written under Ben Jonson's influence, and several copied his treatment of Roman History in *Sejanus*; for instance, *Bonduca* was founded on the *Annals* of Tacitus. While they honoured his strict rules of the Drama they imitated Calderon and Lope de Vega. And their foreign success ended the immemorial development of the Drama of England. Dryden wrote of Beaumont and Fletcher in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, printed in 1668, "These Plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainment; two of them being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's."

While the success of these Plays may have guided Shakespeare when he turned to his last Tragi-comedies his choice may have been also due to the fact that he was exhausted by his Tragical agonies and too weary for laughter. I think that he rewrote *Measure for Measure* about 1604 and then wrote a revision of *Pericles* suggested by it, and then devoted himself to his Tragedies till he had rewritten *Othello*, and then began to rewrite *Troilus and Cressida* darkly but cast it aside when *Antony and Cleopatra* arose from it, and then turned to revise his *Sonnets*, and then began to ennoble *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well that Ends Well*, but abandoned these tasks, retouched the Tragical part of *The Winter's Tale*, made *The Tempest* an Epilogue to the whole of his work and began to change *Cymbeline* from a fantastic Romance to a Tragi-comedy ending in impossible happiness. During this time, I think, he retold *Coriolanus*, perhaps before he turned to *The Tempest*, and began to rewrite *Timon of Athens*.

Two of these last Tragi-comedies, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida*, deal with the perpetual tragedy of human affairs. *Coriolanus* has the same theme, and in it, as in *Timon of Athens*, the mutable and rank-scented many are shown as crows or daws pecking an eagle. *Coriolanus* says,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Thus we debase  
The nature of our seats, and make the rabble  
Call our cares fears; which will in time  
Break ope the locks of the Senate, and bring in  
The crows to peck the eagles,

and he says afterwards,

like an eagle in a dove-cot, I  
Fluttered your Volscians in Corioli.

But *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* comment on the faults of the Great. Angelo falls through the temptations of Power and Isabella says,

Man, proud man,  
Drest in a little brief authority . . .  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven  
As make the Angels weep.

The beneath world in *Measure for Measure* is as vile as it is in *Timon of Athens*. And when the common Soldiers appear in *Troilus and Cressida* Pandarus says, "asses, fools, dolts, chaff and bran, chaff and bran, porridge after meat! . . . Ne'er look, ne'er look, the eagles are gone, crows and daws!" This Play is all concerned with the eagles and it shows most of them as carrion birds. Thersites, whose brothers are Apemantus and Caliban, speaks for the rabble: he is a scurrilous Clown and his railing is justified because all the Princes except Hector are base. There was reason enough why Shakespeare's mind should have dwelt on Government in these days when he saw the English Monarchy falling. And I think that the theme involved in the tale of *Measure for Measure* guided him to rewrite *Troilus and Cressida* next as a picture of the Kings of the World. Instead of rivalling Æschylus, as he did in the heights of his Tragedies, he came near Aristophanes in *Troilus and Cressida*, but he was mocking himself instead of Euripides.

Mr. Masfield writes: "*Troilus and Cressida* is the dialogue scenario of a Play that was never finished. . . . Two or three scenes are finished. The rest is indicated in the crudest



## TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

dialogue, written so hastily that it is often undramatic and nearly always without art or beauty. The finished Scenes are among the grandest ever conceived by Shakespeare, but the grandeur is that of thought not of action." This overlooks the fact which Mr. Saintsbury recognized when he wrote: "It is impossible that *Troilus and Cressida*, in part at least, should not be early." And while the crude work (which Mr. Masfield perceives) should, I think, be ascribed to the days when Shakespeare's writing was crude, the fact that (as he says) the grandeur is that of thought not of action suggests a doubt whether the last form of this Play was intended to be seen on the Stage. Some students have argued that this Play is a satire on the Great of the time, and this would explain why it was printed when (according to the Address to the Reader prefixed to the Second Quarto edition of 1609) it was "never staled with the Stage, never clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar" and "not sullied with the smoky breath of the multitude."

The First Quarto edition of 1609 had on its title page "*The History of Troilus and Cressida* as it was acted by the King's Majesty's Servants at the Globe." In the same year this was issued with a new Preface as "*The Famous History of Troilus and Cresseid*, excellently expressing the beginning of their loves, with the conceited wooing of Pandarus Prince of Lycia." This change in the title would be explained if His Majesty's Servants had acted another Play of this name but not this one. If, for instance, the sententious Ulysses was taken to be a picture of the Solicitor-General, Sir Francis Bacon, whose manner in his *Essays* seems echoed in the verses beginning,

Time hath, my Lord, a wallet at his back  
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,

this would explain why the Players had not acted this version.

The second title page may have meant that this Play was a First Part "excellently expressing the beginning of the loves," and to be followed by one which would give the end of the story. As it ends now, only Hector has fallen, Troilus is left seeking revenge and Cressida still faithful to

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Diomed. The fifth Act holds three conventional endings, one in the eighth Scene where Achilles says,

Come tie his body to my horse's tail,  
Along the field I will the Trojan trail,  
[Exeunt, a retreat sounded]

and another in the ninth Scene where Agamemnon says,

If in his death the Gods have us befriended,  
Great Troy is ours and our sharp wars are ended,  
[Exeunt, marching]

and a third in the tenth Scene where Troilus says,

Strike a free march to Troy! with comfort go :  
Hope of revenge shall hide our inward woe.  
[Exeunt Æneas and Trojans].

Then Pandarus speaks an Epilogue to all these and the Play. It may be that he promised a Second Part which would give the tangled story an end when he said,

Some two months hence my will shall here be made : . . .  
Till then I'll sweat and seek about for cases,  
And at that time bequeath you my diseases.

The Story of Hector seems to have been the first of the parts combined in this Play. It was written, I think, as a short Tragical Play when Shakespeare began. The first twenty-one lines of the Prologue are in his juvenile manner, and so are many others, for instance the lines in the fifth Act spoken by Troilus and beginning "Hector has gone." These verses, I think, were written in the days when Shakespeare wrote the speech given to the First Player in *Hamlet*, beginning "The rugged Pyrrhus." In this Play Agamemnon speaks often in imitation of Marlowe, for instance,

The fierce Polydamas  
Hath beat down Menon : bastard Margarelon  
Hath Doreus prisoner,  
And stands, Colossus-wise, waving his beam  
Upon the pashed corse of the Kings,

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and he uses many words as remarkable as the epithet "mobled" which Polonius admired.

When Lorenzo in *The Merchant of Venice* said,

In such a night  
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan Walls,  
And sighed his soul towards the Grecian tents,  
Where Cressid lay that night,

he was thinking of the sorrowful love-story told by Chaucer ;  
but when Pistol said in *King Henry the Fifth*,

Fetch forth the lazar kite of Cressid's kind,  
Doll Tearsheet she by name,

and the Clown said in *Twelfth Night*, "I would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, Sir, to bring a Cressida to this Troilus," they were remembering the cynical version.

Chaucer drew all the Characters gently in *Troilus and Creseyde* : he made Pandare or Pandarus a faithful friend and showed Creseyde (whom he also called Creseida) a victim of Love, too tender to be faithful :

But truly the story telleth us  
There made never women more woe  
Than she when that she falsed Troilus,  
She said "Alas ! for now is clean ago  
My name in truth of love for ever mo,  
For I have falsed one, the gentillest  
That ever was, and one the worthiest.

"Alas ! of me unto the World's end  
Shall neither ben y-written or y-song  
No good word, for these books will me shend :  
Y-rolled shall I been on many a tongue,  
Throughout the world my bell shall be rung,  
And women most will hate me of all,  
Alas ! that such a case me should befall !"

And she says,

But since I see there is no better way,  
And that too late is now for me to rue,  
To Diomedes I will algate be true.

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Chaucer's debt to Boccaccio was too great to be owned. He might have been prepared to admit that he had used Boccaccio's *Teseide* in his *Knight's Tale* and that the *Reeve's Tale* and the *Shipman's* and the *Franklin's* were all in the *Decameron*; but he did not choose to avow that this Poem was based on the *Filostrato* and so he proclaimed that he found the story in Lollius.

Boccaccio wrote his *Filostrato* as a *Lover's Complaint*, and sent it to his false love Fiammetta. He seems to have got his story, as Mr. Edward Hutton says in his *Giovanni Boccaccio*, "partly from Benoît de Sainte-More, whose *Roman de Troie* had been composed from the uncertainly dated works of *Dictys Cretensis* and *Dares Phrygius*, and partly from the prose Latin *Hystoria Troiana* of Guido delle Colonne." But he changed it because he loved Fiammetta, though he knew her too well to have any trust in her constancy. His Griseida is a girl who loves Love as much as Romeo or Juliet did and forgets all about Troilo as quickly as Romeo forgot all about Rosaline when she sees Diomede:

Egli era grande, e bel della persona,  
Giovane fresco e piacevole assai,  
E forte e fier siccome si ragiona,

and she tells him (quite honestly because she has forgotten all about Troilo),

Amore io non conobbi, poi morio  
Colui al qual lealmente il servai;  
Si come a marito e signor mio.

Chaucer remembered this when he wrote,

Oh young fresh folks, he or she,  
In which that love up groweth with your age,

but he drew his Creseyde less subtly and with English good-nature instead of the French tolerance which was shown by Boccaccio.

Some students have thought that Chaucer's Creseyde was derived through Boccaccio's Griseida from Briseida, which was Benoît de Sainte-More's version of Briseis. But



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John Gower wrote in the Second Book of his *Confessio Amantis* :

At Troie how that Agamemnon  
Supplanted hath the worthy Knight  
Achilles, for that sweet wight  
Which named was Brisseida ;  
And also of Criseida,  
Whom Troilus to love ches  
Supplanted hath Diomedes.

Since we do not know when Gower wrote this (for the date given by Mr. Hales, 1483, is only a guess), we cannot be certain that he had Chaucer's Poem in mind.

Shakespeare's Cressida had nothing in common with Boccaccio's Griseida or with Chaucer's Creseyde apart from her betrayal of Troilus. I think that he wrote his first version of the Story of Troilus in the ignorant mood of his young Italianate Comedies. He may have based it on Guido delle Colonne's *Hystoria Troiana*, which he could have read in John Lydgate's *Troy-Book*, written before 1420 and printed in 1513, or on the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* (a translation of *Le Recueil des Histoires de Troye*), written by William Caxton about 1470 and printed by him about 1474. He may have thought that the version of the story of Troy ascribed to Dares Phrygius was true, as Philip Sidney seems to have done when he wrote in his *Apology for Poesy* of "the feigned Æneas in Virgil" and "the right Æneas in Dares Phrygius."

Dares Phrygius was said to have been a priest of Vulcan who was living in Troy during the Siege, and the account of it ascribed to him was said to have been put into Latin by Cornelius Nepos. The account of the Trojan War ascribed to Dictys of Crete was said to have been found in his tomb in the First Century and to have been translated from Phœnician to Greek and then to Latin. If Quintus Smyrnæus, who seems to have lived in the Fourth Century, knew these books he treated them as idle Romances. He based his story on Homer's and probably on the lost Cyclic Poems of Aretinus and Lesches. In the First Book of his *Fall of Troy* he adopted the account of Thersites given in

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the Second Book of the *Iliad* and expanded it by recording how he was slain by Achilles. And Thersites is the only character drawn in the same way by him and Homer and Shakespeare.

In this Play, as we have it, Cressida discourses with Pandarus with the merriment of *Love's Labour's Lost* or *Much Ado About Nothing* and Troilus avows his devotion in the usual vein of the Italianate youths. Shakespeare, I think, combined two juvenile Plays, the Story of Hector and the Story of Troilus, about 1601, adding the Story of Thersites and Ajax. This form, I think, became the foundation of this dark Tragi-comedy in which these Stories are episodes in a picture of life worthy of Timon. He may have meant this to be tangled, like *King Lear*, and unfinished because then it would be more life-like, or this effect may be due to a distaste for this task which made him throw it aside. I think that while he was working on it he saw his way to a task which would be a completion of his Tragical work. He seems to have planned this last form as an ironical Tragedy which would have been a travesty of his Chronicle Pageant, a tale of Fool and Fight showing the chief heroes as fools. He did not plan this as an attempt to surpass Homer (as Gervinus suggested) or to mock him, for he knew little of him. This Play is a proof that he did not know Greek, for if he had read the *Iliad* in Greek he could not have degraded its heroes. But he may have read part of the *Iliad* in Arthur Hall's "satirical" version of the first two Books, printed in 1581. And the publication of Chapman's seven Books of the *Iliad* in 1598 may have helped him to choose the Story of Ajax.

The last form may have been written in a time of exhaustion, and this may have been why it has the grandeur of thought not of action. In it Achilles and Ulysses debate Philosophy in similar language, and many of the speeches appear as if they came from a note-book and were assigned to the Characters at random instead of springing from them. This seems one of the signs that the last form of this Play is only a sketch. In the Play, as we have it, the first Achilles survives clashing with the last, the first Cressida, the humorous girl of the early Plays, with the last, a false woman

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intrinsically worthless and evil, and the first Troilus, a lover like Romeo, with the last who is elderly and noble like Antony. It is the first Troilus who says in the fourth Scene of the fourth Act when he is parting from Cressida :

Come, to the Port, I'll tell thee Diomed,  
This brave shall oft make thee to hide thy head.  
Lady, give me your hand ; and, as we walk,  
To our own selves bend we our needful talk.

It is the last Troilus who says before this in a speech which has nothing in common with the rest of that Scene,

And suddenly ; where injury of chance  
Puts back leave-taking, justles roughly by  
All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips  
Of all rejoindure, forcibly prevents  
Our locked embrasures, strangles our dear vows  
Even in the birth of our own labouring breath :  
We two, that with so many thousand sighs  
Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves  
With the rude brevity and discharge of one.

This speech must have been either an echo from *Antony and Cleopatra* or else the origin of the music in it. And I think that this noble lament was the source of the parting Scene when Antony said,

I am dying, Egypt, dying ; only  
I here importune Death awhile, until  
Of many thousand kisses the poor last  
I lay upon thy lips.

Sir Walter Raleigh writes of this Play in his *Shakespeare*, " It is hard to believe that the love-passages of the third Act, which are untouched by the spirit of Satire and show Cressida pure and simple, were written after *Romeo and Juliet*, a mere repetition," and he surmises that Shakespeare, finding the love-story of Troilus unfit for a Tragedy, wrote *Romeo and Juliet* instead. I think that *Antony and Cleopatra* arose from the last form of this love-story in the same way as *Romeo and Juliet* was based on the first. The last form of *Troilus and Cressida* was intended, I think, to be a com-

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ment on *Romeo and Juliet*, a bitter Tragedy of a man and woman to be compared with the sweet one of a boy and a girl, and Shakespeare threw it aside and left it only a sketch because a more splendid vision soared from its ashes. *Cressida* became *Cleopatra*, whose falsity was part of her charm, and instead of attempting to ennoble the boy *Troilus* (as he did in that speech), he dreamt there was an Emperor Antony.

In May, 1609, Thomas Thorpe obtained a licence to print a book called *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, and it must have been published at once, for Edward Alleyn's Diary shows that he bought a copy in June for fivepence. This little book seems to have been printed without Shakespeare's consent or opposition from him, and this would be explained if he was living at Stratford. I think that he collected the *Sonnets* of many years after *Antony and Cleopatra* was written and revised several of the juvenile ones, and I infer that he wanted them to be printed, though the fact that the book vanished from notice may indicate that he had some reason for postponing it then.

Thomas Nashe wrote in his *Terrors of the Night*, printed in 1594: "A long time since hath it lain surpressed by me until the urgent importunity of a kind friend of mine (to whom I am sundry ways beholding) wrested a copy from me. That copy progressed from one scrivener's shop to another, and at length grew so common that it was ready to be hung out for one of their signs, like a pair of Indentures." Shakespeare may have employed a scrivener to copy his *Sonnets* for himself or a friend, and Thorpe may have secured another copy of them. This book resembled the other one printed about the same time, *Troilus and Cressida*, for there was the same story of betrayal in each and the same blending of a boy's idle love with a man's heart-breaking passion.

*Troilus and Cressida* remains Tragi-comical because it is governed by Thersites and Pandarus, but its later Tragical drift sets it apart from the other six Tragi-comedies. I think that all these, except *Pericles*, were rewritten later, when he had devoted himself mainly to Tragi-comical work,



## MEASURE FOR MEASURE

and that the last form of *Measure for Measure* was the first of these five.

*Measure for Measure*, which seems to have been first printed in 1623, is a noble Tragi-comedy blended with a juvenile Comedy already revised. If we looked on it as first written after 1603 it would be better described as a Comedy written in a Tragical mood, for in spite of its mirth and the conventional happiness at the end of the tale the inner meaning is dark. But this is prevented by the patent survival of a juvenile version which made Mr. Saintsbury cite this Play in *The Cambridge History of Literature* as "the strongest instance of the suggested earliness, in a more or less complete form, of many more Plays than are contained in Meres' list" and write of it in his *History of English Prosody*: "*Measure for Measure*, however, is in prosodic as in other respects, something of a puzzle. It is generally taken as a rather late Play; but I have always felt sure, for reasons by no means wholly prosodic, that it is in part an early one."

The solemnity of the Tragical mood in it seems to belong to Shakespeare's last Tragical work. The Duke's speech beginning,

Be absolute for death; either death or life  
Shall thereby be the sweeter

must have been written several years after Hamlet's soliloquy,

To be or not to be, that is the question.

The Duke's speech is a man's last meditation. All the thoughts in it were familiar to Shakespeare as they had been to many before. When he wrote "Thy best of rest is sleep" he did not pause to reflect that Seneca had written,

O domitor  
Somne malorum, requies animi,  
Pars humanæ melior vitæ.

When he wrote,

If thou art rich, thou art poor;  
For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,  
Thou bearest thy heavy riches but a journey,  
And death unloads thee

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he echoed the verses in *Julius Cæsar*:

And though we lay these honours on this man . . .  
He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold.

And when he wrote,

When thou art old and rich,  
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb nor beauty,  
To make thy riches pleasant,

he could have turned back to *The Rape of Lucrece*,

The aged man that coffers up his gold  
Is plagued with cramps, and gouts and painful fits,  
And scarce hath eyes his treasure to behold.

These familiar reflections are expressed in this speech with the gravity of a man who has learnt to prepare himself for the coming of Death. He wrote in these days as if he had reached the Apathy of the Stoic Philosophers—and at times as if he had come to accept the darker Creed of the Cynics.

This meditation is an answer to Hamlet's puerile statement that but for the fear of other ills after death a man would rather die than endure such things as

The pangs of despised love, the Law's delay,  
The insolence of Office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes.

Young Claudio shares Hamlet's alarm (though he expresses it more nobly than Hamlet), but he only avows it to Isabella. The Duke would have looked on it as the younger Seneca did on the similar wish ascribed to Mæcenæ which he called "turpissimum votum," adding "contemptissimum putarem, si vivere vellet usque ad crucem."

Seneca wrote in another Epistle: "Non videmus, quam multa nos incommoda exagitant, quam male nobis conveniat hoc corpus? Nunc de ventre, nunc de capite, nunc de pectore ac faucibus querimur: alias nervi nos alias pedes vexant." And in his twenty-fourth Epistle he wrote: "Nemo tam puer est, ut Cerberum timeat et tenebras, et larvalem habitum nudis ossibus cohærentium. Mors nos

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aut consumit aut emittit. Emissis meliora restant, onere detracto : consumptis nihil restat."

Such meditations were natural to an elderly man ; but they would have been false if they had been uttered by Claudio. The division by which the fear of Life is told by the man and the fear of Death by the boy is one of the signs that this Play is later than *Hamlet*. And the Roman mood given to the Catholic Duke is one of the signs that this revision belongs to the Roman group of the Plays.

The Duke's speech has little meaning in it because we are certain that he intends to save Claudio. It belongs to a Tragi-comedy which was only begun ; a noble comment on Life. That Play is a fragment, like the masterly part of *Timon of Athens*. It is to be found in the first Scene of the first Act, but the second (which was, I think, the original beginning) seems to survive from a young Play in the mood of *Love's Labour's Lost*, and the third, though it is partly retouched, ends with lines which explained the intention of the first shallow Comedy,

hence shall we see,

If power change purpose, what our seemers be,

and the fourth Scene is mainly juvenile. The first thirty-one lines of the first Scene of the second Act are mature ; but then the young Play survives with the old humour condemned by Ben Jonson in his Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*. The rest of this Act is little retouched and ends with lines which belong to the first version :

Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die :

More than our brother is our chastity.

I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,

And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest.

Then comes the Duke's speech to Claudio and Claudio's temptation and fall, and this Scene, the first in the third Act, is the chief episode of the last Tragi-comedy. And the rest of the Play is only lightly retouched.

*Measure for Measure* is confused by the blending of incompatible Plays. The first form had the gaiety and the juvenile heartlessness of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado About*

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*Nothing*: Lucio in it was one of the Gentlemen of the Italianate Plays and as entertaining as the talk of the brothels. In the Play, as we have it, he is detestable, and he and the humour of the brothels explain Angelo's abhorrence of Vice.

One radical fault in *Measure for Measure* is the fact that there are two Angelos. The first, the mere hypocrite of a juvenile Comedy, is confused with the second, a man who loved holiness and justice and fell tempted by holiness:

Oh cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,  
With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous  
Is that temptation that doth goad us on  
To sin in loving virtue.

There are two Isabellas also, and the heartlessness of the first still survives when she denounces her brother. So does the old careless end when, forgetting her dream of a conventual chastity, she marries the Duke and Mariana is rewarded with Angelo. But this end has a new meaning when Angelo survives like Parolles. The first Angelo would have welcomed his pardon: the second would have chosen to die. When Claudio says, "Death is a fearful thing," Isabella replies, "and shamed Life a hateful," and Angelo is condemned to shamed life.

Shakespeare may have founded this Play on a version of *Pericles* and on George Whetstone's *Right Excellent and Famous History of Promos and Cassandra*, printed in 1578. Whetstone took the story from one of Cinthio's Novelle in the *Hecatommithi* and from a Tragedy of Cinthio's called *Epitia*. And Cinthio may have copied some Oriental tale, for the Duke behaves like Haroun Al-Raschid and the heartlessness and humour would suit *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, or he may have founded it on a story recorded of Charles the Bold. According to this, one of Charles the Bold's favourites, Claudius Rhynsault, betrayed Sapphira Danvelt in 1468, offering to pardon her husband and executing him when she had yielded, and the Duke punished this by forcing him to marry the widow and endow her with all his wealth and beheading him. In Whetstone's and Cinthio's versions, as in that story, the lady yielded in vain. Shakespeare changed this (perhaps guided by Helena's



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device in the story which he used when he wrote *All's Well that Ends Well*) because Isabella was to marry the Duke. He did this in the first form of this Play, for some of the manner of the fourth Act is juvenile, for instance, when Mariana says,

Let me excuse me, and believe me so,  
My mirth it much displeased, but pleased my woe,

and the Duke answers,

'Tis good ; though music oft hath such a charm.  
To make bad good, and good provoke to harm.

These lines belong to a Comedy which must have been a companion to *Love's Labour's Lost*.

The song beginning

Take, Oh, take thy lips away,  
That so sweetly were forsworn ;

is the first verse of one printed in *The Bloody Brother or Rollo Duke of Normandy*, which seems to have been mainly written by Fletcher with some help from Ben Jonson. The whole song was printed as Shakespeare's by Benson in 1640, and some students have argued that the first verse is his because it is charming. We have either to think that Fletcher or Ben Jonson annexed the verse written by Shakespeare and added another less admirable (which does not seem likely since their attitude towards him in those days would not have allowed such a compliment), or that Shakespeare borrowed this verse because it was charming, or that the Players inserted it because it was popular. Shakespeare did not write that song for this Play since it is addressed to a woman and since the verse sung by the boy would be absurd if Mariana had applied it to Angelo. But in the second Scene of the fifth Act of *The Bloody Brother* the boy is told by Edith to sing it for the entertainment of Rollo. It may be that the Players put the song instead of another when it was popular (perhaps after Shakespeare's death), for its inappropriate nature would have been nothing to them, and this seems the more probable since *The Bloody Brother* appears to have been first acted about 1616.

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This cannot be disproved by the fact that this verse is more charming than anything else written by Fletcher. Thomas Campion, for instance, wrote,

When thou must home to shades of underground,  
And there arrived, a new admired guest,  
The beauteous spirits do engirt thee round,  
White Iope, blithe Helen, and the rest,

and George Peele wrote his *Farewell to Arms*, beginning,

His golden locks Time hath to silver turned,

and Michael Drayton wrote with a wilderness of second-rate Verse one noble Sonnet,

Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part,

and in this they surpassed their usual work more than Fletcher did if he wrote the whole of this song.

Shakespeare may have turned from *Measure for Measure* to *All's Well that Ends Well*, which does not seem to have been printed before 1623, guided to it by Helena's device. It may be that this Play had been called *Love's Labour's Won* and that he gave the new name with an ironical meaning, or the change may have been made in the second form of this Play and intended to show that it was no longer bracketed with *Love's Labour's Lost*. He worked on it now half-heartedly, partly because he had to deal with the intractable stuff of boyish invention: he was too old to find Comedy or charm in this story, and he saw that while Helena's behaviour and Bertram's were pardonable if the tale was fantastic and not meant to be true, they would be merely repulsive if it acquired the veracity of *Measure for Measure*.

The last Helena is subtle and wise. She can say of Parolles :

And yet I know him a notorious liar,  
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward ;  
Yet these fixed evils sit so fit in him,  
That they take place, when virtue's steely bones  
Look bleak in the cold wind : withal, full oft we see  
Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly.

## THE WINTER'S TALE

This is Shakespeare's cold wisdom waiting on the surviving or superfluous folly of the original Play as when the First Lord says, "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues," and "Now, God delay our rebellion! as we are ourselves, what things we are!" and the Second Lord answers, "Merely our own traitors," and Parolles says after he has been fooled,

Yet am I thankful: if my heart were great  
Twould burst at this. Captain I'll be no more;  
But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft  
As Captain shall: simply the thing I am  
Shall make me live.

The bleak light of *Troilus and Cressida* conquers the glow of an Italianate Comedy, and the Play is left desolate with an impossible Helena degrading herself to overcome the reluctance of an impossible Bertram.

This did not happen to the three Tragi-comedies which are commonly taken as the end of his work, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. *All's Well that Ends Well* was left dark because it had no irradiating Scenes like the fourth Act of *The Winter's Tale* or Imogen's adventure in *Cymbeline*. It may be that seeing this he retained the younger work in those Plays: he may have valued it more because he knew that his days of delightful imagination were over.

I think that the first three Acts of *The Winter's Tale* are a juvenile Tragedy or fantastic Romance revised or rewritten in his elderly manner half-heartedly and that the fourth is a separate Comedy written in the days when he wrote *As You Like It*, and that the fifth was added now to unite this with the rest and ennoble the Play by the passion and dignity of the second Leontes.

*Cymbeline* is plainly unfinished. Mr. Masfield says, "Though the writing is so careless and the construction so loose that no one can think of it as a finished Play, it has dramatic Scenes, one faultless lyric, and many marks of

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beauty." And Sir Israel Gollancz says, "The text of the Play is certainly unsatisfactory, and possibly represents in many cases the Poet's rough-cast notes rather than his finished work." But instead of looking on it as unfinished elderly work, as they do, I follow Coleridge in thinking it a juvenile Play partly recast.

Even the first words of this Play must have been either illegible to Heminge and Condell or a mere note for an intended beginning. The First Folio printed them as,

You do not meet a man but frowns  
Our bloods no more obey the Heavens  
Then our Courtiers :  
Still seem as do's the Kings.

The modern Editors have altered them thus,

You do not meet a man but frowns : our bloods  
No more obey the Heavens than our Courtiers  
Still seem as does the King.

And even this guess remains a curious beginning for a happy Romance. Shakespeare could not have intended to leave the opening words either illegible or roughly suggested.

If these lines and many similar ones show that the manuscript of this Play was illegible, this (like the look of his last signature to his Will) may denote that he was shattered by sickness, perhaps by some form of stroke, during the last years of his life. It may be that the last revision of *Cymbeline* was in hand when he died as well as the last *Timon of Athens*.

Iachimo still says in *Cymbeline*,

Our Tarquin thus  
Did softly press the rushes, ere he wakened  
The chastity he wounded ;

and he still notes that Imogen had been reading the story from Ovid which suggested the horrors of *Titus Andronicus*. And Cloten still echoes the criminals of *Titus Andronicus* : he says, "Posthumus, thy head, which is now growing upon thy shoulders, shall within this hour be off ; thy



## CYMBELINE

mistress enforced." But Iachimo has learnt Shakespeare's cold wisdom : he can say,

The cloyed will,  
That satiate yet unsatisfied desire, that tub  
Both filled and running, ravening first the lamb,  
Longs after for the garbage.

And Cloten has begun to be changed. The braggart and fool of the first Act and the second, of whom the Second Lord says,

That such a crafty devil as is his mother,  
Should yield the world this Ass !

can say to himself :

I love and hate her, for she is fair and royal, . . .  
Disdaining me and throwing favours on  
The low Posthumus slanders so her judgment  
That what's else rare is choked, and in that point  
I will conclude to hate her, nay, indeed,  
To be revenged upon her.

The two Princes still speak as young boys and the younger of them, Arviragus, says,

I had rather  
Have skipped from sixteen years of age to sixty,  
To have turned my leaping time into a crutch,  
Than have seen this.

But in spite of this Belarius says in the third Act,

At three and two years old I stole these boys,  
and in the fifth Act he says,

These gentle Princes,  
For such and so they are, these twenty years  
Have I trained up,

and the First Gentleman says in the first Act that the theft was "some twenty years ago." The boys to whom Belarius says,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Stoop, boys, this gate  
Instructs you how to adore the Heavens, and bows you  
To a morning's holy office

are now aged twenty-two and twenty-three.

When Guiderius sees Imogen (whom he has taken for a boy) carried in as dead he still says,

Oh sweetest, fairest lily !  
My brother wears thee not the one half so well  
As when thou grewest thyself.

Shakespeare must have been young when this was his expression of grief. The dirge was a new one, for Arviragus says,

Use like note and words  
Save that "Euriphile" must be "Fidele."

Neither of these names is now sung in it, and a couple of boys making a dirge for their mother would not have sung,

Golden lads and girls all must  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

The last version is seen when Guiderius breaks in,

Prithee, have done,  
And do not play in wench-like words with that  
Which is so serious.

But his own words have been wench-like with the rest of the Episode.

The wicked Queen, who is as cruel as Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, must be elderly since she is the mother of Cloten, who was at least thirty-five and probably older, for Belarius (who has not seen him for twenty years) says,

Long is it since I saw him,  
But time hath nothing blurred those lines of favour  
Which then he wore ; the snatches in his voice,  
And burst of speaking, were as his : I am absolute  
'Twas very Cloten.

And even Imogen is mature when she is resisting Iachimo : she says, for instance,

## THE TEMPEST

Since doubting things go ill often hurts more  
Than to be sure they do; for certainties  
Either are past remedies, or, timely knowing,  
The remedy then born.

This contorted manner belongs to an attempt to reshape this Play as a mature Tragi-comedy, but Shakespeare abandoned that or could not continue it. Imogen is left a girl still, though some of her talk is imitated from elderly people, and her brothers are still innocent boys, and Iachimo, instead of acquiring the subtlety of his rival, Iago, has a wisdom which renders his behaviour impossible. The innocent sweetness of the adventure in Wales gives a young glamour to the rest of the Play. And though some of the Characters in *Cymbeline* speak with an inappropriate wisdom, there is an early morning light in it still.

The light in *The Tempest* is an afternoon glow, fit to transform the cloudy end of a day. This is such a Play as a man tired of imagining sorrows and agonies might have written in an endeavour to find happiness at the end of his time. But the links which unite it with Plays openly founded on early forms or written in Youth suggest that it is a juvenile Comedy ripened and softened, and this seems supported by the apparent transformation of Ariel from a Spirit belonging to a story of Magic to a humorous Fairy.

The evidence that this Play was performed at Court in 1613 (and perhaps two years earlier) may help to show that it was not Shakespeare's last work, unless we are prepared to conclude that he abandoned his dreams for ever before he was aged fifty and three years at least (or perhaps five) before his death and to do this merely because we believe that he was speaking as Prospero. Still, since this Play, like *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, does not seem to have been printed before 1623, he may have revised it after 1613 at a time when he knew that his health was failing, and may have meant it to be an Epilogue to the rest of his work though he may have continued to write till the pen dropped from his failing hand. If so, and if Heminge and Condell were right when they printed it as the first of his Plays, the wheel

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

had come full circle at last, and he was ending his dreams where he began. In that case he resembled Christopher Marlowe if (as I think) Marlowe ended his brief triumph as Faustus. But even in that case the fact that it was carefully finished seems to show that it was not the end of his work. Perhaps we ought to conclude that two Plays at least were written after it—the last version of *Cymbeline* which was unfinished, and the last form of *Timon of Athens* which was only begun.

This Play is a symbol of the whole of his work, which is a musical and magical Island. And, like most of his work, it has a Tragi-comical mood. It is a comedy with a Tragical meaning : indeed, though it ends in happiness for all except Prospero, it is Prospero's Tragedy, for he is robbed of his child and has forsaken his Magic and his beautiful Island and abandoned his vain dreams of reforming Caliban and he has only to live waiting for Death, "every third thought shall be my grave." Death has neither terror nor hope for him, for, like his brother-Duke in *Measure for Measure*, he holds that this little life is rounded with sleep. Though his story is set in Catholic times he is no more of a Catholic than Miranda, who says,

Had I been any god of power, I would  
Have sunk the Sea within the earth.

He leaves repentance to Caliban, who says at the end,

I'll be wise hereafter,  
And seek for grace.

This form of *The Tempest* is a Parable-play like *Every-man* or the old Spanish Apologues ; but Shakespeare did not hark back to the antiquated ways of the Drama, and it is only a Parable because it is wise. Like many other Plays (*Measure for Measure* and *Julius Cæsar* and most of the Scenes of the Chronicle Pageant, for instance), it deals with the Tragedy of the Ruled and the Rulers. If this was his last comment on Life, liberty had its old meaning to him (it was still connected with "libertine") when he was ending and in his eyes men were animals in need of restraint and Freedom only a dream. The drunken Caliban shouts,



## THE TEMPEST

“Freedom! heyday! Freedom,” when he is only exchanging one wise master for many ignorant ones, and the drunken Stephano sings, “Thought is free!” They echo Cinna, who said in the third Act of *Julius Cæsar*,

Liberty! freedom! Tyranny is dead.

Run hence, proclaim it, cry it about the streets,  
and Casca, who said with him,

Some to the common pulpits and cry out,  
“Liberty, freedom and enfranchisement!”

when the Conspirators had killed Julius Cæsar. And Caliban showed his interpretation of Freedom when he announced that he would get a new man.

Gonzalo agrees with this when he quotes Montaigne's Essay, *Des Cannibales*. This passage might have been written in 1603, the year in which John Florio's version of that Essay was printed or some years before that, for Florio had been engaged on his task for several years, and since he served Lord Southampton the odds are that Shakespeare was acquainted with him. Or it may have been part of the last drift of this Play. Even the light-hearted Sebastian and Antonio deride it and Gonzalo admits that he only quoted it in “a kind of merry fooling.”

Montaigne wrote that Essay ironically, mocking his times, but with the belief that there was a good deal to be said for his Savages, as is showed in his *Advertissement de l'Autheur*, “Que si j'eusse esté parmy ces Nations qu'on dit vivre encore sous la douce liberté des premières loix de Nature, je t'asseure que je m'y fusse très volontiers peint tout entier et tout nud,” and at the end of this Essay, “Tout cela ne va pas trop mal: mais quoy? ils ne portent point de haut de chausses.” He was thinking of Plato's *Republic*, and the fragment of *Critias* and the Life of Lycurgus in his favourite Plutarch. Thomas More had shown him the way in his *Utopia*, written about 1515 with a similar intention, and Francis Bacon was to imitate *Critias* in his *New Atlantis*, first written in Latin and printed in English in 1629 after his death, and Campanella was to write his *Civitas Solis* in a Neapolitan prison about the same time.

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare answered such dreams when he drew Caliban's behaviour to Prospero. When he derided Montaigne he echoed the Scene in the fourth Act of the *Second Part of King Henry the Sixth*, which was founded on the Book of St. Alban's through the Chronicles, when Jack Cade says, "There shall be in England seven half-penny loaves sold for a penny : the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops ; and I will make it felony to drink small beer : all the Realm shall be in common ; and in Cheapside shall my palfrey go to grass : and when I am King, as King I will be," and continues after the Mob shouts, "God save your Majesty!" : "I thank you, good people : there shall be no money : all shall eat and drink on my score, and I will apparel all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers, and worship me their lord."

There are few signs of early work in *The Tempest* though some of the phrases are juvenile, as when Prospero says,

The fringed curtains of thine eyes advance,  
And say what thou seest yond.

His long tale to Miranda, which is only broken by pauses when she interrupts him to let him take breath, in the second Scene may survive from a form written before Shakespeare had learnt that a Drama should be written in dialogue. And in the second Act, for instance, Sebastian and Antonio indulge in the tedious jocosity of *Love's Labour's Lost* when they talk of the Widow Dido.

In this Play, as we have it, all the principal men, except Prospero and Ferdinand and Gonzalo, are infamous. King Alonzo has forced his daughter to marry the heathen King of Tunis ; his brother, the light-hearted Sebastian, proposes to murder him in his sleep, helped in this by Antonio, who has betrayed and deposed his own brother, and Trinculo and Stephano join Caliban in a plot to kill Prospero. So Gonzalo is justified when he says of the strange shapes who bring in the banquet in the third Act,

Though they are of monstrous shape, yet, note,  
Their manners are yet more gentle-kind than of  
Our human generation you shall find  
Many, nay, almost any.

## THE TEMPEST

And so is Prospero when he adds,

Honest lord,  
Thou hast said well, for some of you there present  
Are worse than devils.

The Fortunate Island has been peopled with Calibans ; but all this iniquity ends in virtue as suddenly as when the two Wicked Brothers in *As You Like It* reformed. Even Caliban is a humorous monster, eager to repay kindness with love, and though he is degraded by a human brutality his revolt is excused because Prospero had taken his Island and had made him a slave.

The old themes, first Love and the clash of Age and Youth and the treachery of those who are trusted and the laughter of fools, are all in *The Tempest*, but now they are treated with an elderly tolerance : the old sweetness is there, but it is saddened by a knowledge of truth. All the wickedness is forgiven in it because everything in Life is Illusion,

We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on.

And when the Revels are over Prospero repents after all in verses which Shakespeare may have meant as an Epilogue to the whole of his work :

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,  
And what strength I have's mine own,  
Which is most faint : now, 'tis true,  
I must be here confined by you,  
Or sent to Naples. Let me not,  
Since I have my dukedom got,  
And pardoned the deceiver, dwell  
In this bare Island by your spell ;  
But release me from my bands  
With the help of your good hands :  
Gentle breath of yours my sails  
Must fill, or else my project fails,  
Which was to please. Now I want  
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant ;

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

And my ending is despair,  
Unless I be relieved by prayer,  
Which pierces so, that it assaults  
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.  
As you from crimes would pardoned be,  
Let your indulgence set me free.



## BEN JONSON'S OPINION

**I**N the Laudatory Verses prefixed to the Folio of 1623 and entitled, "To the Memory of my beloved, the author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us," Ben Jonson wrote :

To draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,  
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame ;  
While I confess thy writings to be such,  
As neither man nor Muse can praise too much. . . .  
And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek,  
From thence to honour thee I would not seek  
For names, but call forth thundering Æschylus,  
Euripides and Sophocles to us ;  
Paccuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,  
To life again, to hear thy buskin tread  
And shake a stage, or when thy socks were on  
Leave thee alone for the comparison  
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome  
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.

These were conventional praises rivalled by the Verses prefixed to the First Folio of Ben Jonson's Works, printed in 1616, and by the Address to the Reader in the First Folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's Plays, printed in 1647, in which it was said that all transcendent abilities "met in Beaumont and Fletcher, whom but to mention is to throw a cloud upon all former names, and benight posterity ; this book being, without flattery, the greatest monument of the Scene that Time and Humanity have produced." Ben Jonson was apt to feign admiration ; for instance, when he wrote to Mount-eagle,

My Country's parents I have many known,  
But saver of my Country thee alone,

and to King James,

How, best of Kings, dost thou a sceptre bear,  
How, best of Poets, dost the laurel wear ;

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

and there were times when he contradicted his verses by his sayings in Prose ; for instance, he wrote to Francis Beaumont,

How do I love thee, Beaumont and thy Muse  
That unto me dost such religion use !

but when he spoke of him to Drummond of Hawthornden all he said was, " Francis Beaumont loved too much himself and his own verses," and though he praised Michael Drayton in Verse he told Drummond that he did not esteem Drayton and that Drayton feared him.

While Shakespeare was living Ben Jonson never wrote in his praise, except perhaps in a friendly picture of him as Cordatus in *Every Man Out of His Humour*, and since that Play was written for His Majesty's Servants and Shakespeare may have acted the part of Cordatus the friendliness of the picture was natural.

All this throws some doubt on the truthfulness of that eloquent praise, and so does the different note struck in *Discoveries*. Drummond wrote of Ben Jonson : " He is a great lover and praiser of himself ; a contemner and scorner of others ; given rather to lose a friend than a jest, jealous of every word and action of those about him, especially after drink, which is one of the elements in which he liveth." And Ben Jonson described himself in the person of Horace in *Poetaster*, when he made Captain Tucca say of him, " a sharp thorny-toothed satirical rascal ! fly him ; he carries hay in his horn ; he will sooner lose his best friend than his least jest." It would have been a remarkable thing if he, who was so famous for quarrels and angry jesting, had always treated his most dangerous rival with a friendly respect.

Nicholas Rowe did not believe that he did. After stating in his *Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespeare*, printed in 1709, that Shakespeare had helped Jonson by recommending one of his Plays he wrote, " After this they were professed friends ; though I don't know whether the other ever made him an equal return of gentleness and sincerity. Ben was naturally proud and insolent, and in the days of his reputation did so far take upon him the supremacy of wit that he could not but look with an evil eye upon anyone that seemed to stand in competition with him. And if at times he has

## BEN JONSON AND SHAKESPEARE

affected to commend him, it has always been with some reserve, insinuating his incorrectness, a careless manner of writing and want of judgment ; the praise of seldom uttering or blotting out what he writ, which was given him by the Players who were the first publishers of his works after his death, was what Jonson could not bear. He thought it impossible, perhaps, for another man to strike out the greatest thoughts in the finest expression and to reach those excellencies of Poetry with the ease of the first imagination, which himself with infinite labour and study could but hardly attain to. Jonson was certainly a very good scholar, and in that had the advantage of Shakespeare ; though at the same time I believe it must be allowed that what nature gave the latter was more than a balance for what books had given the former ; and the judgment of a great man upon the occasion was, I think, very just and proper. In a conversation between Sir John Suckling, Sir William Davenant, Endymion Porter, Mr. Hales of Eton and Ben Jonson, Sir John Suckling, who was a professed admirer of Shakespeare, had undertaken his defence against Ben Jonson with some warmth ; Mr. Hales, who had sat still for some time hearing Ben reproaching him with want of learning and ignorance of the Ancients, told him at last that if Mr. Shakespeare had not read the Ancients he had likewise not stolen anything from them (a fault the other made no conscience of)." And he added, after saying that Shakespeare's character is best seen in his Writings, " But since Ben Jonson has made a sort of an essay towards it in his *Discoveries*, though, as I have before hinted, he was not very cordial in his friendship, I will venture to give it in his words."

Rowe's view seems supported even by the Laudatory Verses, for Jonson thought it well to begin them by repudiating a wish to draw "envy" (or ill-will) on Shakespeare's name and asserted that he had small Latin and less Greek while he praised him. It may be that the conventional praise was meant to be inappropriate, as when he wrote of Shakespeare's

Well-turned and true-filed lines,  
In each of which he seems to shake a lance,  
As brandished at the eyes of Ignorance,

for this contradicts the opinion of him expressed in *Discoveries*

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

and recorded by Rowe. And Dryden, in his *Essay on Satire*, called it "an insolent, sparing, and invidious panegyric."

It is probable that Ben Jonson was born in Westminster about 1572, and worked for his stepfather, a bricklayer, (when he was a boy, and perhaps afterwards), and was taught at Westminster School. When he grew up he went to the Wars, fighting in Flanders, where (according to his own account) he won glory in single combat, killing a champion and taking his spoils. He seems to have begun his work for the Stage, acting and writing for Henslowe's Men, the Admiral's Servants, about 1592, the year in which Greene attacked Shake-scene in the *Groat'sworth of Wit*. And he won some success in Tragical work, for Meres named him among the best writers of Tragedies in 1598.

That year was important to him, for the Chamberlain's Servants acted his first Comedy, the Italianate version of *Every Man In His Humour*, on the twentieth of September (according to one of Toby Mathew's letters), and on the twenty-second of September he fought and killed one of Henslowe's Men, Gabriel Spencer. We do not know why they quarrelled, but it is possible that Jonson had given some ground of offence to Henslowe or Spencer in the same way as he seems to have caricatured Samuel Daniel as Mateo, afterwards called Mr. Matthew, a Town Gull. Jonson was then arrested for murder and only escaped the gallows by confessing his guilt and pleading Benefit of Clergy. The Middlesex Session Rolls for September, 1598, which describe him as Ben Jonson, Yeoman, say, "he confesses the indictment, asks for the book, reads like a clerk, is marked with the letter T., and is delivered, according to the Statute."

This duel or murder alienated Henslowe, who wrote in one of his letters, dated the twenty-sixth of September, 1598, "Since you were with me I have lost one of my Company, which hurteth me greatly, that is Gabriel, for he is slain in Hogden Fields by the hands of Benjamin Jonson, bricklayer." But some Player came to Jonson's help then, according to the statement addressed to him in *Satiromastix*, "Thou art the true arraigned Poet, and shouldst have been hanged, but for one of these part-takers, these charitable copper-laced Christians, that fetched thee out of Purgatory, Players I



## BEN JONSON AND SHAKESPEARE

mean." We do not know who this Player was, but (according to Rowe) Shakespeare had helped him by introducing his Comedy to the Chamberlain's Servants, and if this is true he may also have been the charitable copper-laced Christian. Shakespeare's name was first in the list of the Principal Comedians in it. They acted *Every Man Out of His Humour* in 1599, and these two years seem to have been the time of the friendship between Jonson and Shakespeare.

It is probable that the story about the Christening, told by Sir Nicholas L'Estrange on John Donne's authority among his *Anecdotes and Traditions*, printed in 1839, belongs to this time. L'Estrange wrote: "Shakespeare was godfather to one of Ben Jonson's children, and after the Christening, being in a deep study, Jonson came to cheer him up and asked him why he was so melancholy. 'No, faith, Ben,' says he, 'not I; but I have been considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my godchild, and I have resolved at last.' 'I prythee what?' say he. 'I' faith, Ben, I'll e'en give him a dozen good latten spoons and thou shalt translate them.'"

If that story belongs to this time the Christening may have been a Catholic one, for Donne was a Catholic then and so was Ben Jonson, who had adopted that Creed while he was in prison and professed it for twelve years, but forsook it in 1610, about the time when the third Earl of Southampton and many other Catholics changed. According to Drummond, after Jonson was reconciled to the Anglican Church and "left off to be a Recusant, at his first Communion, in token of his reconciliation, he drank out all the full cup of wine," and he was accustomed to say that "he was for any Religion, as being versed in both."

Jonson's first change of Religion in 1598 may have helped to inspire the attacks made on him by Marston and Dekker, who were conspicuous for their hearty dislike of Catholics: Marston, for instance, wrote in the *Scourge of Villainy* of "Peevish Papists, crouching and kneeling to dumb idols," and Dekker afterwards wrote *The Double P. P.*, a satire on the Gunpowder Plot, and *The Whore of Babylon*. In any case, his change of employment when he began working for the Chamberlain's Servants would have helped to cause these,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

for Marston and Dekker were both writing for Henslowe, and so would have been glad to please him and avenge Gabriel Spencer. And they may have been caricatured in *Every Man In His Humour*.

John Marston, who was about twenty-three in 1598, first became prominent in that year as the author of *Pygmalion's Image* and *A Scourge for Villainy*. In one of these, or in his share of *Histriomastix*, he accused Jonson (as Jonson told Drummond) of having been "addicted to Venery when he was young." This charge must have dealt with recent affairs, for Jonson was only about twenty-five at this time. Jonson's natural indignation was shown with his pen as well as his cudgel, and both were ponderous weapons. He told Drummond that he had many quarrels with Marston and beat him and took his pistol from him; and one of his *Epigrams*, *On Playwright*, was written to commemorate this:

Playwright, convict of public wrongs to men,  
Takes private beatings and begins again :  
Two kinds of valour he doth show at once,  
Active in his brain and passive in his bones.

We know very little of Marston, except that he was described in *The Return from Parnassus*,

Methinks he is a ruffian in his style,  
Withouten bands or garter's ornament ;  
He quaffs a cup of Frenchman's Helicon,  
Then roister-doister in his oily terms,  
Cuts, thrusts, and foins at whomsoe'er he meets,

and that he was in Holy Orders and held the living of Christchurch in Hampshire from 1616 to 1631 and died in London in 1634.

We know still less about Thomas Dekker: he seems to have been about twenty-eight and only beginning his admirable Plays at this time. So we can only guess which of Jonson's insults were intended for them.

Marston's attack on Jonson and the Chamberlain's Servants in *Histriomastix, or the Player Whipped*, written with Dekker in 1598 or early in 1599 and perhaps founded on an obsolete Play, began the open War of the Poets, in which these writers,

## THE RETURN FROM PARNASSUS

all young and struggling for fame, dealt random blows : it was a Stage-fight and the insults in it were meant to be humorous. Jonson was working with Dekker in the midst of the fray and was praised in a fulsome dedication by Marston in 1604. After his first reply, *Every Man Out of His Humour*, had been acted by the Chamberlain's Servants in 1599 another battle began, in which the Boy-Players mocked the adults. These two Stage-fights were combined, and he sided with the Children against his former employers : his three next Plays were performed by the Children of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel—*The Case is Altered* in 1599, *Cynthia's Revels* in 1600, and *Poetaster* in 1601. The Children of Paul's, a rival Company, acted *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (in which he and his mock enemies were equally blamed) late in 1600 or early in 1601, and then *Satiromastix, or the Untrussing of the Humorous Poet*, which seems to have been written or rewritten by Dekker with the assistance of Marston and others.

We cannot be certain what part (if any) Shakespeare bore in all this, but we know that his Company acted *Satiromastix* in 1601. We have no reason to think that he kept out of the fray or escaped his share of the blows. And in the *Second Part of the Return from Parnassus*, which seems to have been acted at Cambridge in 1601 and was printed in 1606, Kemp was introduced saying, "Few of the University pen Play well : they smell too much of that writer Ovid, and of that writer Metamorphoses, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter. . . . Why, here is our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down, aye, and Ben Jonson, too. Oh, that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow ! He brought up Horace, giving the poets a pill ; but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit." In the same Play *Judicio* calls Ben Jonson, "The wittiest fellow of a bricklayer in England," and *Ingenioso* replies, "A mere empiric : one that gets what he hath by observation, and makes only nature privy to what he indites : so slow an inventor that he were better betake himself to his old trade of bricklaying."

Shakespeare's name does not appear in the list of the six principal Comedians who acted *Every Man Out of His Humour* in 1599, and this would be explained if he took the part of *Cordatus*. *Mitis* and *Cordatus* and *Asper* had no share in

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

the Play : their names were put apart from the rest in the list of the Characters (called the list of the Actors), and in the explanatory descriptions of them it was said that "Mitis is a person of no action, and therefore we have reason to afford him no character," and that Cordatus was "the author's friend, a man inly acquainted with the scope and drift of his plot ; of a discreet and understanding judgment, and has the place of a moderator." Jonson himself may have taken the part of Asper, who is described thus : "He is of an ingenious and free spirit, eager and constant in reproof, without fear controlling the World's abuses. One whom no servile hope of gain or frosty apprehension of danger can make to be a parasite either to time, place or opinion."

In his first speech Asper says,

My soul  
Was never ground into such oily colours,  
To flatter vice and daub iniquity,  
But (with an armed and resolved hand)  
I'll strip the ragged follies of the time,  
Naked, as at their birth,

and Cordatus breaks in,

Be not too bold !

You trouble me.

Cordatus, the judicious or prudent, and Mitis, the gentle or mild, try to restrain Asper, the harsh or exasperated.

If Jonson was Asper he took another part too, Macilente, who is described as "a man well-parted, a sufficient scholar, and travailed ; who (wanting that place in the World's account, which he thinks his merit capable of) falls into such an envious apoplexy, with which his judgment is so dazzled and distasted, that he grows violently impatient of any opposite happiness in another."

Cordatus defends Shakespeare's neglect of the ancient laws of the Drama, and the Play ends with a speech in which Macilente says : " Well, gentlemen, I should have gone in and returned to you, as I was Asper at the first : but (by reason the shift would have been somewhat long, and we are loth



## BEN JONSON AND FALSTAFF

to draw your patience further) we'll entreat you to imagine it. . . . Marry, I will not do as Plautus in his *Amphytruo* for all this (Summi Jovis causa, Plaudite) beg a Plaudite for God's sake; but if you (out of the bounty of your good liking) will bestow it; why, you may (in time) make lean Macilente as fat as Sir John Fal-Staffe." And it may be that Jonson-Macilente retired with a bow to Shakespeare-Cordatus.

The version of Falstaff's name in this speech in the Folio of 1616 may refer to the fact that Shakespeare's name was sometimes spelt with a hyphen. This allusion may mean that Shakespeare was sometimes called by the name of his most popular Character. This seems supported by one of Sir Toby Mathew's letters, in which he wrote after Shakespeare's death, "as that excellent author, Sir John Falstaff, says, 'what for your business, news, device, foolery and liberty, I never dealt better since I was a man.'" And it may be also shown by Lady Southampton's letter in which she wrote to her husband while he was in Ireland with Essex in 1599: "All the news I can send you that I think will make you merry is that I read in a letter from London that Sir John Falstaff is by his mistress, Dame Pintpot, made father of a goodly miller's thumb, a boy that's all head and very little body, but this is a secret."

Otherwise this allusion may indicate that Jonson was said to be depicted as Falstaff and repudiated this on the ground that he did not resemble the fat Knight in his girth. He seems to have been lean at this time, for *Satiromastix* said, "Horace was a goodly corpulent gentleman, and not so lean a hollow-cheekt scrag as thou art," and in *Every Man Out of His Humour* Carlo Buffone calls Macilente "a raw-boned anatomy"; but Kemp called him fat in his *Nine Days' Wonder*, printed in April, 1600, if he described him as the "fat filthy ballet-maker." Even if he was lean then, he may have resembled Falstaff in his manner of life, as it is certain that he did in his boasting. And he could not have pleaded that difference in the days when he wrote in the *Epistle to Mr. Arthur Squib*, printed in *Underwoods*, in 1640, that his weight was twenty stone lacking two pounds, and in the *Poet to the Painter*,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Why, though I seem of a prodigious waist,  
I am not so voluminous and vast,  
But there are lines wherewith I might be embraced.

'Tis true, as my womb swells, so my back stoops,  
And the whole lump grows round, deformed, and droops,  
And yet the Tun at Heidelberg had hoops.

Falstaff might have written the verses called *My Picture Left in Scotland* which Jonson wrote after his visit to Drummond :

Oh, but my conscious fears  
That fly my thoughts between,  
Tell me that she hath seen  
My hundreds of grey hairs,  
Told seven and forty years,  
Read so much waste as she cannot embrace  
My mountain belly and my rocky face,  
And all these through her eyes have stopped her ears.

Falstaff might have been treated by Prince Hal as Ben Jonson was by young Raleigh in Paris in 1612 or 1613, according to the story he told to Drummond : "This youth, being knavishly inclined, amongst other pastimes caused him to be drunken and dead drunk, so that he knew not where he was ; hereafter laid him on a car which he made to be drawn by pioneers through the streets, at every corner showing his governor stretched out." And Jonson as he was seen in his later days revelling at the Dog or the Triple Tun with the boys whom he sealed of the Tribe of Ben, when (according to Aubrey) "he would many times exceed in drink—canary was his beloved liquor," must have resembled the merry Knight of the Plays. If Pistol was drawn from Marston (as was suggested by Mr. George Wyndham in his *Essay on the Poems of Shakespeare*, and by Mr. Seccombe and Mr. Allen in their *Age of Shakespeare*) this would support the theory that Jonson was recognized as caricatured in Shakespeare's transformed version of the traditional Knight.

The picture of Cordatus remains the only thing in Ben Jonson's Works which can be taken as indicating a liking for Shakespeare, except the two tributes paid when Shakespeare

## P O E T - A P E

was dead. And the Folio of 1616 also contains an Epigram called *On Poet-Ape* :

Poor Poet-Ape, that would be thought our chief,  
Whose works are e'en the frippery of wit,  
From brocage is become so bold a thief,  
As we, the robbed, leave rage, and pity it.  
At first he made low shifts, would pick and glean,  
Buy the reversion of old Plays; now grown  
To a little wealth, and credit in the *Scene*,  
He takes up all, makes each man's wit his own,  
And, told of this, he slights it. Tut, such crimes  
The sluggish gaping auditor devours;  
He marks not whose 'twas first: and after-times  
May judge it to be his, as well as ours.  
Fool! as if half eyes will not know a fleece  
From locks of wool, or shreds from the whole piece!

This Epigram resembles the passage in the *Groat'sworth of Wit*, printed in 1592, in which Greene wrote, "There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tiger's heart wrapped in a Player's hide* supposes he is as well able to bombast out a Blank Verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes fac totum* is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. . . . Let these apes emulate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions."

Jonson may have borrowed the name Poet-Ape from Sidney's *Apology for Poesy*, in which it was said that the cause why Poetry is not esteemed in England is the fault of Poet-Apes not Poets. But he may have intended the name Poet-Ape to mean Poet-Player, for he was accustomed to call the Players "apes" as in the song in *Poetaster*, in which he referred to the clothes worn by some of them in Royal processions,

Detraction is but baseness, varlet,  
And apes are apes though clothed in scarlet,

and in the Apologetical Dialogue to that Play,

The crimes these whippers reprehend,  
Or what their servile apes gesticulate,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

and in the Prologue to it,

The conjuring means  
Of base detractors and illiterate apes.

Donald Lupton, for instance, gave them this name in his *London and the Country Carbonadoed*, printed in 1632; he wrote of them, "All their care is to be like Apes to imitate and express other men's actions in their own persons." And the *Return from Parnassus* called a Player "a mimic Ape." If we could be sure that Ben Jonson used Poet-Ape to mean Poet-Player there would be the more reason to think that this Epigram was an insult to Shakespeare.

He may have written it either when he was working for Henslowe or about 1601, developing it from the Verses in *Poetaster*,

Are there no Players here? no Poet-Apes  
That come with basilisk eyes? whose forked tongues  
Are steeped in venom as their hearts in gall?

in the same way as he expanded the Author's last words in the Apologetical Dialogue printed with that Comical Satire,

There is something comes into my thought,  
That must, and shall, be sung, high and aloof,  
Safe from the Wolves black jaw, and the dull Asses hoof,

when he wrote in the *Ode to Himself*, printed in *Underwoods* in the Folio of 1641,

And since our dainty age,  
Cannot endure reproof,  
Make not thyself a page,  
To that strumpet the Stage,  
But sing, high and aloof,  
Safe from the Wolves black jaw and the dull Asses hoof.

The charge that Poet-Ape's Works were the frippery of wit seems a sign that he was mainly successful as a writer of Comedies, and this would have been true of Shakespeare before *Julius Cæsar*, as we have it, was written. But Jonson never praised Shakespeare's Tragedies: even in his Laudatory Verses prefixed to the Folio of 1623 he only professed to



## CYNTHIA'S REVELS

think that he could be compared with the Romans and Greeks when he wrote Comedies, "when thy socks were on," and he expressed his opinion of the Chronicle Pageant in the Prologue to *Every Man In His Humour* :

With three rusty swords  
And help of some few foot-and-half-foot words  
Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars.

We do not know when the Prologue to *Every Man In His Humour* was written, for that Play was printed without it in 1600 and revised later, perhaps in 1601. The Prologue may have been written during the War of the Poets, and this would explain why, as Mr. George Wyndham has said, "the whole tirade is an attack in set terms on the kind of Play which Shakespeare wrote and which the Public preferred before Jonson's."

In the Induction to *Cynthia's Revels* the Third Child says, "It is in the general behaviour of this fair society here, that I am to speak, at least the more judicious part of it, which seems much distasted with the immodest and obscene writing of many, in their Plays. Besides, they could wish your Poets would leave to be Promoters of other men's jests, and to waylay all the stale *Apophthegms* or old books they can hear of (in print or otherwise) to farce their *Scenes* withal. That they would not so penuriously glean wit, from every laundress or hackney-man, or derive their best grace (with servile imitation) from Common Stages, or observation of the company they converse with, as if their invention lived wholly upon another man's trencher. Again, that feeding their friends with nothing of their own, but what they have twice or thrice cooked, they should not wantonly give out how soon they had drest it; nor how many coaches came to carry away the broken-meat, besides hobbyhorses and footcloth nags. . . . They say the *umbræ*, or ghosts of some three or four Plays, departed a dozen years since, have been seen walking on your Stage here : take heed, boy, if your house be haunted by such *hobgoblins*, 'twill fright away all your spectators quickly."

This may be another humorous description of Shakespeare, who was prone to repeat stale apophthegms and imitated the

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Common Stages, the Players, and observed his companions and produced three or four twice- or thrice-cooked Plays at this time, the ghosts of others departed a "dozen years since," when he was beginning to write.

One Play commonly dated about this time, 1600, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, could be accused of gleaning wit from laundresses, and it is said to have been written in a very short time. John Dennis wrote of it in the dedication of the *Comical Gallant*, printed in 1702 :

But Shakespeare's Play in fourteen days was writ,  
And in that space to make all just and fit  
Were an attempt surpassing human wit.

This Play seems to refer to Jonson's *Humours* ; for instance, Nym says in the third Scene of the first Act, "the good humour is to steal at a minute's rest," and "the anchor is deep : will that humour pass ?" and "the humour rises ; it is good : humour me the angels," and "I thank thee for that humour," and "I will run no base humour : here take the humour-letter," and "I have operations which be humours of revenge," and "I will discuss the humours of this love to Page," and "my humour shall not cool." And one of Pistol's remarks in the same Scene, "he hath studied her will, and translated her will, out of honesty into English," seems like one of the usual jests about Jonson's frequent translations. Jonson was always amorous : he wrote long afterwards,

Let it not your wonder move,  
Less your laughter, that I love.  
Though I now write fifty years—  
I have had and have my peers.  
Poets, though divine, are men,  
Some have loved as old again.

If he had been taken to be depicted as Falstaff this Comedy might have been hastily revived and reshaped with an intent to annoy him after he quarrelled with the Chamberlain's Servants.

In the third Act of *Cynthia's Revels*, Crites-Jonson says that he has been

## POETASTER

Where I have seen (most honoured Arete)  
The strangest pageant fashioned like a Court,

and describes the men he has seen there, beginning with a Tragical Player, probably Burbage, and including one of whom he says,

Another swears  
His *Scene* of courtship over ; bids, believe him,  
Twenty times, ere they will ; anon, doth seem  
As he would kiss his hand away in kindness ;  
Then walks off melancholic and stands wreathed  
As he were pinned up to the Arras thus.

The Player who often talks of retiring from the Stage and is apt to be effusively friendly and then stands apart with his arms folded and his back to the wall and lost in melancholy, may have been meant for Shakespeare, who was shown in the only description by name which has survived (L'Estrange's story of his jest at the Christening) in a deep study and apparently mournful on a festive occasion.

Ben Jonson's elephantine jocosity leaves his Stage enemies vague and different in his different onslaughts. It may be that he was not able to draw the Characters truthfully in these Comedies or that he had no such intention.

Though he told Drummond some twenty years afterwards that he had written *Poetaster* against Marston, it does not follow from this that he had intended to draw Marston as the chief Poetaster, who is named Rufus Laberius Crispinus or Crispinas. The name Crispinus might be taken as showing that this Character was meant to be Dekker, who is said to have been the son of a cobbler and had written the *Shoemaker's Holiday* in 1599, for St. Crispin was the patron of shoemakers. And this seems supported when Crispinus is shown to be afraid of his creditors, for Henslowe's Diary proves that Dekker had been imprisoned for debt in 1598. But Dekker seems to have recognized that he had been drawn as Demetrius Fannius, Playdresser and Plagiary, and the name Crispinus was found in Horace's *Satires*.

Laberius was the Equestrian Roman who wrote vulgar farces or Mimes, and complained that he had been degraded

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

when Cæsar forced him to appear on the Stage. Horace wrote of him in the tenth Satire :

Et Laberi mimos, ut pulchra poemata, mirer.

This name has no link with either Dekker or Marston.

The name Rufus suggests that the Poetaster had auburn or tawny hair. This has not been recorded of either Marston or Dekker. The Poetaster's hair was conspicuous, for Chloe says to him, "and shall your looks change ? and your hair change ?" and when he replies, "Why, a man may be a poet and yet not change his hair," she answers : "Well, we shall see your cunning : yet if you can change your hair, do." The Poetaster was forced to vomit new-fangled words, and this appears a possible link with Marston who was addicted to them. But he was above all things effeminate, while Marston must have been a brave man, since he was willing to court repeated thrashings from one of Jonson's size and ferocity.

In the first scene of the second Act Chloe says to Crispinus, "Are you a gentleman born ?" and he replies, "That I am, lady, you shall see mine Arms, if it please you." She says then, "No, your legs do sufficiently show you are a gentleman born, sir ; for a man borne upon little legs is always a gentleman borne." And he rejoins, "Yet, I pray you, vouchsafe the sight of my Arms, Mistress ; for I bear them about me, to have them seen : my name is Crispinus or Crispinas, indeed ; which is well expressed in my Arms (a Face crying *in chief*, and beneath it a bloody Toe, between three Thorns *pungent*)." Neither Marston nor Dekker spelt his name with a hyphen. Dekker had no claim to bear Arms, and Marston had no need to assert a gentle descent, for he was known to be one of the Marstons of Shropshire who bore as their crests a Demi-eagle and a Demi-greyhound.

Crispinus begins in the second Act with the words, "I am very well, sir. Ne'er trust me, but you are most excellently seated here, full of sweet delight and blandishment ! An excellent air. . . . I am most strenuously well, I thank you, sir." He speaks throughout with this affectation, which resembles the tone of Shakespeare's young men in his Italianate Comedies, and, like Cordatus, in *Every Man Out of His Humour*, and the writer attacked in *Cynthia's Revels* he



## POETASTER

observes everything. When Chloe says to him, "Is that the fashion of courtiers?" he replies, "I assure you it is, lady, I have observed it," and when she says, "Good master Crispinus, you can observe, you say," he answers, "I warrant you, sweet lady, let me alone to observe till I turn myself to nothing but observation." In the third Act he sees Horace (who is meant to be Jonson) and says to himself, "Yonder's Horace: they say he is an excellent Poet: Mæcenas loves him. I'll fall into his acquaintance if I can. I think he be composing as he goes in the street! ha? 'tis a good humour, and he be: I'll compose too," and accosts him, saying, "Sweet Horace, Minerva and the Muses stand auspicious to thy designs. How farest thou, sweet man, frolic? rich? gallant? ha?" He says afterwards: "We are a gentleman, besides, our name is Rufus Laberius Crispinus: we are a pretty Stoic too," and Horace answers, "to the proportion of your beard, I think it, sir." Later in the same Scene Crispinus says, "I protest to thee, Horace (do but taste me once), if I do know myself and mine own virtues truly, thou wilt not make that esteem of Varius or Virgil or Tibullus, or any of them indeed, as now in thy ignorance thou dost; which I am content to forgive: I would fain see which of these could pen more verses in a day, or with more facility, than I." And he asks Horace to make him known to Mæcenas and says, "I'll bribe his porter and the grooms of his chamber; and make his doors open to me that way, first: and then I'll observe my times." He is shown to be transparently vain, but he tries to hide this with an affectation of modesty.

Crispinus bears a curious resemblance to the account of Boyet in the fifth Act of *Love's Labour's Lost*, of whom it was said that he kissed away his hand in courtesy (like the Player described in *Cynthia's Revels*):

The ladies call him sweet. . . .  
And consciences that will not die in debt  
Pay him the due of honey-tongued Boyet.

Since Shakespeare's name was sometimes spelt with a hyphen (Shake-speare), as in the *Sonnets* of 1609, he may have been exposed to the taunt that he did this in support of his claim to the Arms which he had obtained recently, in 1599;

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“Gold on a bend sable, a spear of the first” with as a crest “a falcon holding a spear.” The Bust at Stratford-on-Avon seems to show that his hair was tawny or auburn, and all the alleged portraits of him agree that he wore it long: and the name Rufus suggested his also because it was linked with King William Rufus. He wrote Mimes like Laberius, and (like him) the Poet in his *Sonnets* complained that he was degraded by the life of the Stage. The Droeshout Engraving suggests that he had a scanty beard like Crispinus and, like him, a frail body and little legs. Like Crispinus he was compared to Mercury, as when Freeman wrote in *Rubbe and a Great Cast*, which was printed in 1614,

Shakespeare, that nimble Mercury thy brain,  
Lulls many hundred Argus eyes asleep.

He seems to have been taunted with vanity when Greene wrote in the *Groat'sworth of Wit* of an upstart who “is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country.” His facility in writing was famous, and his way of observing everything was commonly recognized, as when John Aubrey wrote of him in the *Lives of Eminent Men*, “Ben Jonson and he did gather humours of men daily wherever they came.” And ten, at least, of the thirty “crudities” (such as reciprocal, retrograde and defunct), which are ascribed to Crispinus can be found in his Plays.

It may be that Crispinus was partly intended as a caricature of Shakespeare (of whom Rowe recorded that he was “of too great sweetness in his manners”), as he was in the days when he may still have resembled the youths in his Italianate Comedies.

In that case the clumsy caricature was drawn without venom. Ben Jonson's Mæcenas in those days was Esme Stuart, Seigneur D'Aubigny, commonly called Lord D'Aubigny. If Shakespeare wished to make his acquaintance, as Crispinus did, it was only (as this version admits) because he wished to observe the lives of such men.

Some of the Parodies in the third Act are plainly imitations of Shakespeare. For instance, “Why, then, lament therefore: damned be thy guts unto King Pluto's hell and princely Erebus, for sparrows must have food,” seems meant to

## TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

reproduce Pistol, who says in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*,  
"young ravens must have food."

Ben Jonson wrote in the Prologue to this Play,

If any muse why I salute the Stage  
An armed Prologue; know, 'tis a dangerous age :  
Wherein, who writes, had need present his *Scenes*  
Forty-fold proof against the conjuring means  
Of base detractors, and illiterate apes,  
That fill up rooms in fair and formal shapes.

And Shakespeare wrote in the Prologue to *Troilus and Cressida*,

Hither am I come  
A Prologue armed, but not in confidence  
Of author's pen, or actor's voice, but suited  
In like conditions as our argument.

This apparent allusion seems to support the belief that a form of *Troilus and Cressida* produced at this time was the purge mentioned in the *Return from Parnassus*. If this was the purge which repaid the pill, we can infer that *Poetaster* had given Shakespeare some particular ground for taking offence. Such a ground would be visible if we could conclude that he had been drawn as Crispinus; but he had no call to avenge Marston or Dekker.

If (as I think) Mr. George Wyndham was right in identifying Ajax with Jonson and Thersites with Marston, this makes it certain that Marston was not drawn as Crispinus. The account of Carlo Buffone prefixed to *Every Man Out of His Humour*, "a public scurrilous and profane jester, that (more swift than Circe) with absurd *similes* will transform any person into deformity. . . . His religion is railing, and his discourse ribaldry," could have described Shakespeare's Thersites. And so could Cordatus' description of him in the Prologue: "He is one, the Author calls him Carlo Buffone, an impudent common jester, a violent railler and an incomprehensible Epicure. . . . He will sooner lose his soul than a jest, and profane even the most holy things to excite laughter: no honourable or reverend personage whatsoever can come within the reach of his eye, but is turned into all manner of variety by his adulterate similes." The same

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Character is drawn as an Anaides, the shameless, in *Cynthia's Revels*, where, for instance, Crites says of Hedon and Anaides,

The one, a light voluptuous reveller,  
The other a strange arrogating puff,  
Both impudent and arrogant enough :  
They talk (as they are wont) not as I merit :  
Traduce by custom, as most dogs do bark,  
Do nothing out of judgment but disease.

If Carlo Buffone and Anaides were intended for Marston, so was Thersites. He may have been also drawn as Captain Bobadil in *Every Man in His Humour*, and as Captain Tucca in *Poetaster*, and as Pistol by Shakespeare, and none of these Characters bears any resemblance to the effeminate Poetaster Crispinus. They all resemble Ralph Roister Doister, and this seems to support the description of him in the *Return from Parnassus*.

The Interlude of Thersites and Ajax in *Troilus and Cressida* seems a savage attack on Marston combined with a humorous description of Jonson. This seems a sign that Shakespeare resented something written by Marston much more than Jonson's jocosity, but even if we could be sure what it was, it would be of no value because Marston was impartially scurrilous. His reason for coupling them may be explained by Nestor's statement that Ajax—

Makes factious feasts ; rails on our state of war  
Bold as an Oracle, and sets Thersites,  
A slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint,  
To match us in comparisons with dirt.

It may be that Jonson was suspected of acting in this way in the War of the Poets, fighting a sham battle with Marston while encouraging him to hurl his insults at others. But Ajax does not do this in the Play. Thersites haunts him with insults and is rewarded with beatings, and he says in the third Scene of the second Act : " Shall the elephant Ajax carry it thus ? He beats me, and I rail at him. Oh, worthy satisfaction ! Would it were otherwise ; that I could beat him whilst he railed at me." This seems an allusion to the beatings which Jonson had inflicted on Marston. Thersites' part in



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this Play is to insult the rest and provoke discord between them, as Marston did in the War of the Poets and as Captain Tucca did in *Poetaster*, and he says in the fifth Act, "Now they are clapper-clawing one another, I'll go look on." He hates and despises himself and everyone else: he says, "I am a rascal; a scurvy railing knave; a very filthy rogue." And Hector spares him for that reason and answers, "I do believe thee. Live." All this may well show that Thersites is a picture of Marston, and this is made the more probable when he is introduced with the words—

When rank Thersites opes his mastic jaws,

for this may be an allusion to *Histriomastix*, or to the fact that he signed himself *Theriomastix* in the *Scourge of Villainy*.

Ajax seems a picture of Jonson. Alexander says of him in the first Act: "This man, lady, hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions; he is as valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant: a man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion: there is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attaint but he carries some stain of it: he is melancholy without cause and merry against the hair: he hath the joints of everything; but everything so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight." And Cressida answers, "But how should this man, that makes me smile, make Hector angry?" Thersites says of him in the third Scene of the third Act: "Why a' stalks up and down like a peacock—a stride and a stand: ruminates like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning: bites his lips with a politic regard, as who should say, 'There were wit in this head an' 'twould out': and so there is; but it lies as coldly in him as fire in a flint, which will not show without knocking. The man's undone for ever; for if Hector break not his neck in the combat, he'll break it himself in vainglory. He knows not me: I said 'Good morrow, Ajax,' and he replies, 'Thanks, Agamemnon.'"

Thersites' account resembles Jonson's picture of Horace in *Poetaster*, and it may be that Ajax' failure to recognize

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Thersites refers to Horace's attitude when he was addressed by Crispinus. The picture of Ajax in these passages and in the rest of the Play may be a retort to the attack on Crispinus, for while the Poetaster was depicted as garrulous and childishly vain and excessively friendly and given to boasting his facility and his skill in observing all the ways of the World, Ajax is shown melancholy and full of vainglory and as churlish as the bear and as slow as the elephant, a purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight. This picture is by no means unfriendly, and it agrees with Hector's words after their battle,

Let me embrace thee, Ajax :  
By him that thunders, thou hast lusty arms ;  
Hector would have them fall upon him thus.

The reconciliation between Hector and Ajax after these words may have led to another between Shakespeare and Jonson, for the Chamberlain's Servants performed Jonson's next Play, *Sejanus*, in 1603, and Shakespeare acted in it. But if they were reconciled this did not prevent Jonson from helping Marston and Chapman to write *Eastward Ho* (in which Shakespeare was parodied) in 1605.

There may be a side-light on Jonson's attitude to Shakespeare in *Kemp's Humble Request*. William Kemp, who had been greatly admired as Peter in *Romeo and Juliet* and as Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, quarrelled with the Chamberlain's Servants in 1599 and published his *Nine Days' Wonder* in April, 1600. He added to it *Kemp's Humble Request to the impudent generation of Ballet-makers and their adherents* :

“ My notable Shake-rags,—

“ I have made a privy search what private Jig-monger of your jolly number hath been the author of those abominable Ballets written of me. . . .

“ Still, the search continuing, I met a proper upright youth, only for a little stooping in the shoulder, all heart to the heel, a penny Poet whose first making was a miserable stolen story of Mac-Doel or Mac-Dobeth or Mac-Somewhat, for I am sure a Mac it was, though I never had the maw to see it : and he told me there was a fat filthy ballet-maker

## NINE DAYS' WONDER

that should have once been his journey-man to his trade, who lived about the town, and ten to one ! but he had thus terribly abused me and my Tabourer for that he was able to do such a thing in print. A shrewd presumption !

“ I found him about the Bankside sitting at a Play. I desired to speak with him, had him to a tavern, charged a pipe of tobacco, and then laid this terrible accusation to his charge. He swells presently like one of the four Winds. The violence of his breath blew the tobacco out of his pipe, and the heat of his wrath drank dry two bowls of Rhenish Wine. At length, having power to speak, ‘ Name my accuser,’ saith he, ‘ or I defy thee, Kemp, at the quart-staff.’

“ I told him and all his anger turned to laughter, swearing it did him good to have ill-words of a hoddy-doddy, a habber-de-hoy, a chicken, a squib, a squall ! one that hath not wit enough to make a ballet, but by Pol and Ædipol ! would Pol his father, Derick his dad, do anything, how ill so-ever, to serve his apish humour.

“ I hardly believed this youth, that I took to be gracious, had been so graceless ; but I heard afterwards his mother-in-law was eye and ear-witness to his father’s abuse by this blessed child, on a public Stage, in a Merry Host of an Inn’s part.

“ Yet, all this while could not I find the true Ballad-maker, till, by chance a friend of mine pulled out of his pocket a book in Latin called *Mundus Furiosus*, printed at Cullen, written by one of the vilest and arrantest cullians that ever wrote a book, his name Jansonus. . . . This beggarly lying busybody’s name brought out the Ballad-maker’s, and it was generally confirmed it was his kinsman.”

This Ballad-maker may have been Richard Johnson, as Mr. Andrew Lang has suggested in his *Social History of England in the Seventeenth Century*. If so, it is probable that the fat filthy Ballet-maker who was taken for him was one who had a similar name, Ben Jonson, whose habitual drinking feats and violence suit the scene in the tavern. And in that case the Shake-rag whose apish humour led him to send the dancing Clown to accuse his former journeyman, may well have been Shakespeare. Mr. Andrew Lang inclined to that

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

view, saying, "Kemp's Shake-rag is much in the style of Greene's Shake-scene." For all we know, Kemp may have been much older than Shakespeare, and this would help to explain why he stopped acting in 1599. If so, he might have called him a youth, or this may have referred to his looks, for if the Ely House Portrait is genuine Shakespeare looked young in 1603.

If Shakespeare was that Poet the charge that he had abused his father as the Merry Host of an Inn may mean that the Host in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was said to have been drawn from his father. If so, the statement that his mother-in-law witnessed the Comedy may have been a mistake, since mother-in-law commonly meant stepmother then. About 1656 Archdeacon Thomas Plume, who was born in 1630, wrote that Shakespeare was the son of a glover and that "Sir John Mennes saw once his old father in a shop, a merry-cheeked old man." This statement is open to doubt, since the only Sir John Mennes of whom we have record was born in 1599, but Plume may have blundered in repeating the anecdote. If John Shakespeare was a merry old man he may have been drawn as the Merry Host of the Garter. If Shakespeare drew a humorous sketch of his father in a form of this Comedy, which may have been meant for the amusement of Stratford, he did no more than Charles Dickens did when he described Mr. Micawber, who (according to Mr. George Wyndham) probably resembled John Shakespeare.

If Kemp meant that Shakespeare set him to plague Ben Jonson they are seen in this anecdote as they are in L'Estrange's tale of the Christening: Jonson is a good-humoured butt in both stories since (according to Kemp) his anger ended in laughter. And Shakespeare's attitude in both is the same as it is in the only other anecdote told of his London days, the tale written in John Manningham's Diary in the year after *Kemp's Humble Request* was published according to which he overheard his friend Burbage promising to visit a lady and forestalled him, and told him that William the Conqueror was before Richard the Third.

The two first of these three stories are the only possible traces of wit-combats between Shakespeare and Jonson. Fuller wrote about Shakespeare in his *Worthies of Warwickshire*,



## WIT-COMBATS

printed in 1662 : " Indeed, his learning was very little, so that as Cornish diamonds are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed and smooth, even as they are taken out of the earth, so Nature itself was all the art that was used upon him. Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war, Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in Learning, solid but slow in his performance : Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all the winds by the quickness of his wit and invention." Of course, Fuller did not see such wit-combats since he was born in 1608 ; and nobody else recorded them. Beaumont's Verses to Jonson,

What things have we seen  
Done at the Mermaid !

refer to days when (I think) Shakespeare was at Stratford-on-Avon, for Beaumont began to write for the Stage in 1607, and Herrick's *Ode for Ben Jonson*,

Ah, Ben !  
Say how or when  
Shall we, thy guests,  
Meet at those lyric feasts  
Made at the Sun,  
The Dog, the Triple Tun,

refers to still later days, for Herrick was born in 1591.

The only trace of a merry-meeting is found in the note written between 1661 and 1663, by John Ward, who was Vicar of Stratford from 1662 to 1668 : " Shakespeare, Drayton and Ben Jonson had a merry-meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted. Remember to peruse Shakespeare's Plays and be versed in them, that I may not be found ignorant in that matter." If John Ward had perused Drayton's Poems and the *Return from Parnassus* into the bargain, he might have changed his account of a meeting which happened (if he was right) some thirteen years before he was born.

Michael Drayton was notoriously sober : the *Return from*

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

*Parnassus* said of him, "He wants one true note of a Poet of our times: and that is this; he cannot swagger it well in a tavern nor domineer in a hothouse." And he never called Shakespeare a friend. In his *Elegy of Poets and Poesie*, printed in 1627, he claimed five Poets as friends, Sir William Alexander of Menstries (afterwards the first Earl of Stirling) and William Drummond and the two Beaumonts and William Browne,

Then the two Beaumonts and my Browne arose,  
My dear companions, whom I freely chose  
My bosom friends; and in their several ways  
Rightly born Poets, and in these last days,  
Men of much note and no less nobler parts,  
Such as have freely told to me their hearts,  
As I have mine to them.

But he only praised Shakespeare tepidly in conjunction with Nashe's skill in taking revenge by Satire,—

And, be it said of thee,  
Shakespeare, thou hadst as smooth a Comic vein  
Fitting the sock, and in thy natural brain  
As strong conception and as clear a rage  
As anyone that trafficked with the Stage.

He admired Jonson more, though he did not assert friendship with him,—

Learned Jonson in this list I bring,  
Who had drunk deep of the Pierian Spring,  
Whose knowledge did him worthily prefer,  
And long was Lord here of the Theatre,  
Who in opinion made out learnedest to stick  
Whether in poems rightly dramatic,  
Strong Seneca or Plautus, he or they  
Should bear the buskin or the sock away.

Drayton was born in Warwickshire a year before Shakespeare, and was accustomed to sing the praises of the Forest of Arden,

Fair Arden, thou my Tempe art alone,

## DRAYTON AND SHAKESPEARE

and spent his manhood mainly in London among the writers till 1603, and used to spend his Summers at Clifford Chambers, the home of his life-long friend, Lady Rainsford, about four miles from Stratford-on-Avon. Since this might have helped to make him intimate with Shakespeare his reticence is all the more notable. There may have been some old quarrel between them or, perhaps, he was too proud to consort with a mere townsman of Stratford, for the five friends he named were his superiors by birth.

We do not know when his *Elegy of Poets* was written, but this was probably after 1614. The *Elegy* printed first in the same volume was probably written in 1614, for he wrote of the hard winter,

The Thames was not so frozen yet this year  
As is my bosom,

and that was a year famous for cold. Ben Jonson never recorded any visit to Stratford, though it is possible that he passed through that town on the way to the short visit to Sir Henry Goodyere commemorated in one of his *Epigrams* :

Goodyere, I am glad, and grateful to report  
Myself a witness of thy few days' sport :  
Where I both learnt why wise men hawking follow  
And why that bird was sacred to Apollo.

Since he knew Drayton and since Lady Rainsford was Goodyere's sister he may have broken the journey at Clifford Chambers. But this was probably written before 1612, the year in which he obtained a licence to publish the *Epigrams* printed in the Folio of 1616.

The odds are that John Ward, or the person who told him this tale, made the mistake which others have shared when they have concluded that Jonson and Drayton and Shakespeare must have been friends because they were rivals. Nicholas Rowe had never heard of any such friendship, for he wrote of Shakespeare, "What particular habitude or friendship, he contracted with private men I have not been able to learn." And when Shakespeare made his last Will he left the usual legacies to be spent in the purchase of memorial-rings, but

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

he did not select Jonson or Drayton or any other literary rival of his.

When Drayton wrote that Ben Jonson

Long was Lord here of the Theatre

he recorded a view which Jonson certainly shared. Jonson's great days began in 1603, for the new King was a pedant and therefore the courtiers were compelled to admire the ponderous Tragedies which began with *Sejanus*. He won renown too with his Masques, and the young writers looked on him as their chief, attracted by the fame of his learning and by the more amiable mood which came with success; but most of the spectators preferred Shakespeare's Tragedies, as Leonard Digges wrote in his Verses printed with Shakespeare's Poems in 1640,

When some new day they would not brook a line  
Of tedious though well-laboured *Catiline*;  
*Sejanus* too was irksome.

This must have been the more bitter to Jonson because he looked on himself as the champion of the Laws of Drama, and he spoke his mind in *Volpone* and *Bartholomew Fair*.

*Volpone* was acted by his Majesty's Servants in 1605, but the dedication to the Two Universities was probably written later, perhaps in 1616. In it he wrote, "It is certain, nor can it with any forehead be opposed, that the too-much licence of Poetasters, in this time, hath much deformed their mistress, that every day their manifold and manifest ignorance doth stick unnatural reproaches upon her. . . . The increase of which lust in liberty, together with the present trade of the Stage, in all their misc'line Enterludes, what learned or liberal soul doth not already abhor? where nothing but the filth of the time is uttered, and that with such impropriety of phrase, such plenty of *solecisms*, such dearth of sense, so bold *prolepses*, such racked *metaphors*, with Brothelry, able to violate the ears of a pagan, and blasphemy to turn the blood of a Christian to water. . . . If my Muses be true to me, I shall raise the despised head of Poetry again, and stripping her out of those rotten and base rags wherewith the Times have adulterated her



## VOLPONE

form, restore her to her primitive habit, feature and majesty.”

The Prologue to *Volpone* repeats the protest made in *Cynthia's Revels*, and it begins :

Now, luck yet send us, and a little wit  
Will serve, to make our Play hit,  
(According to the palates of the season)  
Here is rhyme, not empty of reason :  
This you were bid to credit, from our Poet,  
Whose true scope, if you would know it,  
In all his Poems, still, hath been this measure,  
To mix profit, with your pleasure ;  
And not as some (whose throats their envy failing)  
Cry hoarsely, all he writes is railing :  
And, when his Plays come forth, think they can flout them,  
With saying, he was a year about them. . . .  
Yet, thus much I can give you, as a token  
Of his Plays' worth. No eggs are broken ;  
Nor quaking custards with fierce teeth affrighted ;  
Wherewith your rout are so delighted ;  
Nor hailes he in a gull, old ends reciting,  
To stop gaps in his loose writing ;  
With such a deal of monstrous and forced action :  
As might make Bethlehem a faction :  
Nor made he his Play, for jests stolen from each table,  
But makes jests, to fit his fable,  
And so presents quick *Comedy*, refined  
As best Critics have designed,  
The laws of time, place, persons, he observeth,  
From no needful rule he swerveth.

*Bartholomew Fair* was acted in 1614 by the Lady Elizabeth's Servants, but it does not seem to have been printed before 1631, which is the date it bears in the Folio of 1641. In the Induction to it he tilted against some Master-Poet : Stage-keeper says, “ And some writer (that I know) had had but the penning o' this matter, he would have made you such a jig-a-jogging in the booths, you should have thought an earthquake had been in the Fair ! But these Master-Poets, they will have their own absurd courses ; they will be informed of nothing ! He has (sir-reverence) kicked

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

me three or four times about the Tying-house, I thank him, for but offering to put in, with my experience. . . . I am an Ass ! I, and yet I kept the Stage in Master Tarleton's time, I thank my stars. Ho ! and that man had lived to have played in *Bartholomew Fair*, you should have seen him have come in, and have been cosened in the Cloth-quarter, so finely. And Adams, the Rogue, had leaped and capered upon him. . . . And then a substantial Watch to have stolen in upon them, and taken them away, with mistaking words, as the fashion is, in the Stage-practice." And in the agreement which follows it is said : "He that will swear *Feronimo* or *Andronicus* are the best Plays yet, shall pass unexcepted at here as a man whose judgment shows it is constant, and hath stood still these five and twenty or thirty years. Though it be an Ignorance, it is a virtuous and stayed Ignorance, and next to truth, a confirmed error does well ; such a one the *Author* knows where to find him. It is further covenanted, concluded and agreed, that however great the expectation be, no person here is to expect more than he knows, or better ware than a Fair will afford : neither to look back to the sword-and-buckler age of Smithfield, but content himself with the present. Instead of a little Davy, to take toll of the bawds, the Author doth promise a strutting Horse-courser, with a leer-drunkard, two or three to attend him, in as good equipage as you could wish. A wise Justice of the Peace meditant. . . . A sweet singer of new Ballads *allurant* : and as fresh an *Hypocrite* as ever was broached *rampant*. If there be never a Servant Monster in the Fair, who can help it ? he says ; nor a nest of *Antiques* ? He is loth to make Nature afraid in his *Plays*, like those that beget Tales, Tempests, and such like Drolleries, to mix his head with other men's heels ; let his concupiscence of Jigs and Dances reign as strong as it will amongst you : yet if the Puppets will please anybody, they shall be entreated to come in. In consideration of which, it is finally agreed, by the foresaid hearers and spectators that they neither in themself conceal, nor suffer by them to be concealed, any State-decipherer, or politic Picklock of the Scene, so solemnly ridiculous as to search out who was meant by the Ginger-bread Woman, who by the Hobby-horseman,

## BARTHOLOMEW FAIR

who by the Costard-monger, nay, who by their wares. Or that will pretend to affirm (on his own *inspired ignorance*) what Mirror of Magistrates is meant by the Justice, what great lady by the Pig-woman, what concealed Statesman by the Seller of Mousetraps, and so of the rest."

This Master-Poet who had kicked Jonson about the Tyring-house three or four times for offering to criticize him was not Marston or Dekker. Neither claimed to be a Master-Poet, and Marston had probably desisted from writing: the last Play known to be his, *What You Will*, was printed in 1607, for the *Insatiate Countess*, printed in 1613, may have been written by Barkstead. And neither of them clung to the antiquated ways of the Stage. It seems plain that the Master-Poet was

Poor Poet-Ape that would be thought our chief, and the description of him suits Shakespeare alone. If this Master-Poet who was still faithful to the ways of *Jeronimo* and *Titus Andronicus* and to the sword-and-buckler Drama of Smithfield (instead of obeying Jonson's Classical rules), and to the old Jigs and Dances and to the Stage-practice of the Watch with mistaking words was meant to be Shakespeare, this was probably Ben Jonson's last criticism of him while he was living. He may have meant to assert that nearly all Shakespeare's Tragedies sprang from *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*, which seems to be true.

This attack on the writer of *Tales*, *Tempests* and such-like Drolleries may be taken as showing that Jonson was said to have been depicted as Falstaff, for the three Plays in which Falstaff appeared and *Troilus and Cressida* seem the only ones in which he could have been kicked about the Tyring-house. The Treasurer's Accounts for May, 1613, prove that Heminge was paid for entertaining the Court with eighteen Plays, including *Sir John Falstaff*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. *Sir John Falstaff* may have been either the Comedy from *King Henry the Fourth* or *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Perhaps the revival of it in 1613 led Jonson to quarrel with His Majesty's Servants and give *Bartholomew Fair* to the Lady Elizabeth's Servants. Such a quarrel seems indicated by the praise of the puppets

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

in the fifth Act of the Play: "Well, they are a civil Company. I like them for that; they offer not to fleer or jeer or break jests, as the great Players do; and then there goes not so much charge to the feasting of them or making them drunk as to the other." And a renewal of his quarrel with them might have led him to repeat the attack he made in *Cynthia's Revels*.

This was about the time of his adventure in Paris when young Raleigh exhibited him drunk in the streets, and he was aged about forty and had attained the huge size of which he was accustomed to boast; so the resemblance between him and the Knight must have been evident. This would help to explain why he protested that the spectators should not try to discover who was meant by the Gingerbread Woman or the rest of the Characters.

When Shakespeare was dead Jonson wrote a second tribute to him (or a judgment of him) in a tone of patronage fitting to the Lord of the Theatre. Its condescension is enough to suggest that these two were not friends. We cannot be certain when this judgment was written, for Jonson's *Timber or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter as they have flowed out of his daily Readings or had their reflux to his peculiar Notion of the Times* was merely (as its title explains) a collection of passages translated or borrowed from old books and applied to current affairs, and he may have compiled it from time to time during his leisure. But since he wrote of "the late Lord St. Albane" a few pages after he gave his peculiar Notion of Shakespeare, this was probably written after 1626. If he wrote this when his too-popular rival had been dead for ten years, and three years after paying a tardy homage to him in the Folio of 1623, it was natural that he should have tempered his blame with a profession of love which may have expressed a failing man's kinder memory of a former companion who had shown kindness to him when he was young.

In this little book, which was printed in 1641, after his death, he applied the elder Seneca's praise of Severus Cassius in his *Controversia* to "the late Lord St. Albane" and his judgment or censure of Quintus Haterius to Shakespeare, expanding both to point their effect, and this discounts



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the worth of his testimony, for he may have been tempted to support his quotations. Of course, he remembered that Tacitus agreed with this judgment of Haterius and that the younger Seneca wrote in his fortieth Epistle: "nam Q. Haterii cursum, suis temporibus oratoris celeberrimi, longe abesse ab homine sano volo. . . . Summa ergo summarum hæc erit; tardiloquium te esse jubeo." The different censures of Haterius agreed that his profligate facility robbed him of his chance of renown, and this was the drift of Ben Jonson's final judgment of Shakespeare. In it he translated some of the elder Seneca's words; for instance, "In sua potestate habebat ingenium" and "sœpe incidebat in ea quæ derisum effugere non possent," and "Redimebat tamen vitia virtutibus, et persœpe plus habebat quod laudares quam cui ignosceres."

If his brief censure of Shakespeare is read with its context its meaning is evident. While he was judging his rival he was praising himself, as he did in his account of the True Artificer, and it may be that he had in his mind the passage in the *Annals* of Tacitus: "Eloquentiæ quoad vixit celebratæ: monumenta ingenii ejus haud perinde retinentur. Scilicet impetu magis quam cura vigebat. Utque aliorum meditatio et labor in posterum valescit; sic Haterii canorum illud et profluens, cum ipso simul extinctum est."

In the section he called *Censura de Poetis* he wrote: "Nothing in our age, I have observed, is more preposterous than the running judgments upon Poetry and Poets; when we shall hear those things commended, and cried up for the best writings, which a man would scarce vouchsafe to wrap any wholesome drug in; he would never light his Tobacco with them. And those men almost named for Miracles, who are yet so vile, that if a man should go about to examine and correct them, he must make all they have done but one blot. Their good is so entangled with their bad, as forcibly one must draw on the other's death with it. A Sponge dipped in Ink will do all:

Comitetur punica librum

Spongia

Et paulo post

Non possunt multa, una litura potest.

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Yet their vices have not hurt them : nay, a great many they have profited, for they have been loved for nothing else. And this false opinion grows strong against the best men : if once it take root with the Ignorant. Cestius in his time was preferred to Cicero ; so far as the Ignorant durst. They learned him without book, and had him often in their mouths : but a man cannot imagine that thing so foolish or rude but will find and enjoy an Admirer, at least a Reader, or Spectator. The Puppets are seen now in despite of the Players : Heath's *Epigrams* and the *Skuller's Poems* have their applause. There are never wanting that dare prefer the worst Preachers, the worst Pleaders, the worst Poets : not that the better have left to write or speak better, but that they that hear them judge worse ; *non illi pejus dicunt, sed hi corruptius judicant*. Nay, if it were put to the question of the Water Rimer's works against Spenser's, I doubt not but they would find more suffrages ; because they most favour common vices, out of a prerogative the Vulgar have to lose their judgments and like that which is naught. . . .

“Indeed the Multitude commend Writers as they do Fencers or Wrestlers, who if they come in robustiously, and put for it with a deal of violence, are received for the braver fellows : when many times their own rudeness is the cause of their disgrace, and a slight touch of their Adversary gives all that boisterous force the foil. But in these things the unskilful are naturally deceived, and judging wholly by the bulk, think rude things greater than polished, and scattered more numerous than composed : Nor think this only to be true in the sordid Multitude but the neater sort of our Gallants : for all are the Multitude ; only they differ in clothes, not in judgment or understanding.”

Then he continued with a marginal note *De Shakespeare nostrat :*

“I remember the Players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out line. My answer hath been, would he had blotted a thousand. Which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told Posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted. And to justify

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mine own candour (for I loved the man, and do honour his memory, (on this side Idolatry) as much as any). He was (indeed) honest and of an open and free nature : had an excellent Phantsie, brave notions, and gentle expressions : wherein he flowed with that facility, that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped : *Sufflaminandus erat* ; as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power ; would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter : As when he said in the person of *Cæsar*, one speaking to him, *Cæsar, thou dost me wrong*. He replied : *Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause* : and such-like, which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised, than to be pardoned."

Ben Jonson may not have known that in the Folio of 1623 the reply which he condemned in *Discoveries* and echoed in the *Staple of News*, acted in 1625, was changed to

Cæsar doth not wrong, nor without cause  
Will he be satisfied.

His last opinion of Shakespeare has much more in common with the rebukes he administered to an ignorant rival in *Cynthia's Revels*, the *Poetaster*, *Volpone* and *Bartholomew Fair* than with the Verses prefixed to the Folio of 1623. There is a personal note in it and perhaps he was thinking of other faults when he translated the elder Seneca's account of Haterius in the final words, " But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised, than to be pardoned."





## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

I HAVE now given you a clear mirror of my mind : use it therefore like a mirror—and take heed how you let it fall or how you soil it with your breath.

—King James the First (in Bacon's *Apophthegms*).

Ben Jonson wrote of the only authenticated portrait of Shakespeare, the Droeshout Engraving in the Folio of 1623 :

This Figure, that thou here seest put,  
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut ;  
Wherein the Graver had a strife  
With Nature, to outdo the life :  
O, could he but have drawn his wit  
As well in brass, as he hath hit  
His face, the Print would then surpass  
All that was ever writ in brass.  
But, since he cannot, Reader, look  
Not on his Picture, but his Book.

Though this praise is conventional it is backed by the certainty that Heminge and Condell, who had known Shakespeare intimately so many years, would not have disfigured their Folio of 1623 with a portrait which could not claim resemblance to him.

If the Droeshout Engraving was like him, this cannot be said of the Bust on his Monument at Stratford-on-Avon. The man drawn in the Droeshout Engraving watches Life wanly with a rueful attention, he has an exhausted face and sensual lips and a doomed look as if he is conscious of a mortal disease. This man lived apart and looked on and showed the World a face like a mask. The other shown in the Bust at Stratford-on-Avon seems stolid and prosperous ; his nose is much shorter, his mouth is not sensual and it is twisted as if he had suffered a stroke. This man might have lived a bustling life and amassed money in trade.

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

The Bust was made by the tombmakers, Garret or Gerard Johnson the younger and his brother Nicholas (sons of Gheeraert Janssen of Amsterdam, who settled in Southwark in 1567 and was known there as Garret Johnson and died in 1611), and the effigies produced in their trade were often inaccurate. Still, we could suppose that Shakespeare's widow and children accepted it as a likeness of him if we could be sure that it had not suffered a change; but this is open to doubt.

Sir William Dugdale visited Stratford in 1634 and sketched it then or from memory, and the Engraving of it published in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire* in 1656 bears little resemblance to the Bust as we have it. Sir Sidney Lee says of it: "The countenance is emaciated instead of plump, and, while the forehead is bald, the face is bearded with drooping moustache." If Dugdale sketched it from memory he may have been wrong, but Nicholas Rowe reproduced his version of it in 1709 and it is probable that Thomas Betterton, who had visited Stratford for him, would have warned him if there had been a mistake. And William Fulman seems to have approved Dugdale's Engraving in a note written before 1688: "William Shakespeare was born at Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire about 1563-4. From an actor of Plays he became a composer. He died April, twenty-third, 1616, ætat 53, probably at Stratford, for there he is buried and hath a monument (Dugdale, p. 520)." And Richard Davies, who was Vicar of the neighbouring parish of Sapperton, did not disagree with this when he added some statements before 1708.

Thirty-seven years after Rowe published his Engraving the Monument was said to be much decayed, and a Stratford limner named Hall was employed to "beautify" and repair it. We have no means of knowing how much he did; but the length of the upper lip and the shortness of the nose have been cited as proving that the nose was repaired by shortening it. And Hall may have changed the former emaciation to plumpness in an attempt to "beautify" this likeness of Shakespeare. In 1793 Malone persuaded a Vicar of Stratford to have the Bust whitewashed; but there was an attempt to restore its first colours in 1861.

## THE ELY HOUSE PORTRAIT

Some sculptors believe that the Bust was made from a death-mask, and this would account for the flatness of the back of the head which is not in accordance with the face and forehead. Shakespeare's children may have procured a mask for this purpose, and this would have been the more likely if there had been no recent portrait of him. And it may be that this death-mask was employed as a model for the Droeshout Engraving. That Engraving shows a face like a mask, and the rest of it is carelessly sketched; the hair looks like a wig, the left ear is impossible and so is the body. The face has a ghostly look, and if its eyes were shut it would be dead. Only the part of it which might have been drawn from a mask is skilful, and even this has the fault that the sensual mouth contradicts the rest of the face. It may be that Martin Droeshout (who was only fifteen when Shakespeare died and may not have known him) wished to replace the twisted mouth of the death-mask, which may have been deformed by paralysis or the rigour of death, and had recourse to an early portrait of him. It so happens that the mouth, as he drew it, resembles the one shown in the painting called the Ely House Portrait.

There is no proof that the Ely House Portrait is a genuine one, for all we know of it is that it was bought in 1846 by Thomas Turton, who was a Bishop of Ely. Still, if it is fraudulent, the artist who painted it from the Droeshout Engraving was able to guess what the tired face might have been like before it was ravaged, and he was eccentric enough to jeopardy his chances of profit by contradicting all the usual notions. My impression is that the Ely House Portrait is either genuine or a copy of one painted about the date which it bears, 1603. Mr. Spielmann, who in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* ranked the Droeshout Engraving as the only portrait certainly genuine, wrote of this one that "it is very far from being a proved fraud." If Shakespeare left his work for the Stage in 1603 a portrait of him might have been painted for his Company then. In that case, and if the painting now called "the Droeshout Original Portrait" (of which we know nothing before 1892) is genuine and truthfully dated 1609, we would have portraits of him as he was before he turned to his Tragedies, and in the

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

year in which the *Sonnets* were printed. But the so-called Original Portrait is one which a painter who knew nothing of Shakespeare as he is seen in his Works might have copied from the Droeshout Engraving. It is painted over another and appears to resemble the Fourth Folio's version of the Droeshout Engraving: it is more skilfully painted than the admitted frauds by Holder and Zincke, but Holder, when he confessed one of his forgeries, said, "I afterwards made another Shakespeare worth a score such as above," and this may be the one he admired.

If Martin Droeshout relied partly on the Ely House Portrait, this would explain why the collar or ruff drawn by him resembles the one shown in it and is of a kind which was already old-fashioned in England in 1603. It is a plain ruff of the kind worn in France by the Huguenots. The Bust shows a collar which might have been worn in 1616 without eccentricity, but no man in his senses could have worn its rich scarlet doublet in everyday life in Stratford-on-Avon. The costume of the Bust may represent the scarlet one worn by the Players when they were summoned to walk among other servants in the Royal processions. The importance of such details was proved, for instance, when Mr. Mabie produced in his *Life of William Shakespeare* a portrait of the third Earl of Essex as one of the second Earl though the collar in it could have warned him of his mistake.

The Droeshout Engraving has the effect of representing a mask and a wig and a tabard instead of a man in everyday clothes, and though this may have been unintentional it happens to be appropriate in depicting a Player. The man shown in it could be described as the child was in Lady Southampton's gossiping letter about some one called Falstaff as "all head and very little body," and this too is appropriate in a picture of Shakespeare whose writings were often as unsubstantial as dreams. In the Ely House Portrait, too, the shoulders are sloping, though this has been disguised by the doublet, and while the man seems to be of average height or over it he appears to be fragile.

The man shown in the Ely House Portrait has the quiet attention of the Droeshout Engraving and the same baldness,



## THE ELY HOUSE PORTRAIT

but his face is still smooth and he has a gentle and effeminate look. In it the mouth which seems sensual in the Droeshout Engraving is only sensuous because it is governed by the placidity which dwells in the eyes. This is a man conscious of weakness, standing apart. This man, whose grave comeliness is only the sunset of the charm of his Youth, could have said with Lyly's Endimion, "Am I that Endimion who was wont in Court to lead my life?" and with him when Eumenides answered, "Thou art that Endimion, and I Eumenides: wilt thou not yet call me to remembrance?" could have replied, "Ah, sweet Eumenides, I now perceive that thou art he and that myself have the name of Endimion, but that this should be my body I doubt: for how could my curled locks be turned to grey hairs and my strong body to a dying weakness, having waxed old and not knowing it?"

If we could be certain that the Ely House Portrait is genuine we would need no other proof that some of the tales recorded of Shakespeare on the authority of gossip are false. The Droeshout Engraving would go far to prove this, if it was not made from a death-mask; but if it was, the argument fails, because a man's face may be ennobled by Death, and he may be, like Polonius,

Most still, most secret and most grave,  
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.

If the Ely House Portrait is genuine it proves that the secrecy and stillness and gravity of the Droeshout Engraving were all to be seen in Shakespeare's face while it retained the fading light of his Youth. And because that light lingers in it this likeness is made more valuable (if it is true), for it enables us to imagine how he had looked when he was younger. We could infer from it that he had an effeminate charm when he was young,

A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted.

Such a man might have drawn his own character in the Poems of Love and in the fantastic youths of the Italianate Comedies and would have attracted the effeminate young Earl of Southampton. This might have been a picture of Jaques remembering the time when he shared the mirth of

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Mercutio. The man shown in it could have said with Lorenzo de' Medici,

Quant' e bella giovinezza  
Che si fugge tuttavia :  
Chi vuol' esser lieto sia ;  
Di doman' non c'è certezza.

Shakespeare's countrymen began by accepting a foreign notion of him, since the Droeshout Engraving and the Bust were the work of Dutchmen who may never have seen him. The most trustworthy Portrait of him is an English one to be found in his own Poems and Plays. He did not attempt to draw himself as Hamlet or Caliban ; but he showed us his nature because a man is known by his dreams and by the way in which he understands others. All the Characters he drew were his children and we know him from them. We can say of him as Ben Jonson did in the Verses prefixed to the Folio of 1623,

Look how the father's face  
Lives in his issue ; even so, the race  
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shines  
In his well-turned and true-filed lines.

While he was writing he acted every part in his Plays, and so he is visible as if he had been tempted by many kinds of temptation, and we can know him better by this than if we knew his behaviour in the ordinary chances of life.

Of course, in looking for him as he is drawn in his Plays we have to remember that the path of Imagination is contrary to the everyday one : the crippled child dreams of heroic triumphs in War and the kitchen-maid sighs for the impossible Prince. Still, the crippled child's dreams may tell us more than his doings.

We can know Shakespeare because nobody ever drew himself in so many disguises. Indeed, it may be that his real nature is shown more plainly because our understanding of it is not confused by a fragmentary knowledge of his private affairs. This understanding should assist us to judge the truth of the tales told of him long after his time by people

## THE PORTRAIT IN THE PLAYS

who had not read his Plays or his Poems. He spent his life playing with fire, and no one could simulate so many passions without exciting his own : exhaustion may have made him weak-willed, and perhaps he had errors of his own to repent and sufferings of his own to remember ; but we know nothing of this, and there is no obligation to defame him by guesses.

If we knew what Characters he took in his Plays this would help us to know him since he would have written them to suit his own nature. But we have only the legends that he acted Mercutio and the Ghost in *Hamlet* and Old Adam in *As You Like It*, and Davies' assertion that he played some kingly parts—which may have been King Richard the Second in the second half of that Play and King Henry the Sixth and King Henry the Fourth, for this would help to explain why those dissimilar Kings were drawn so much alike.

One of these legends may help us to see him as he was in his Youth. One young man appears with different names in several Plays, as Proteus in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and as the honey-tongued Boyet in *Love's Labour's Lost* and as Gratiano in *The Merchant of Venice* and as Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* and as Sebastian in *The Tempest*, for instance ; he is always a youth with a shining face, eager and friendly, high-spirited and exceedingly talkative, "sufflaminandus," and he is frequently snubbed, as when Romeo says to Mercutio,

Peace ! peace ! Mercutio, peace !  
Thou talkest of nothing,

and Bassanio says, "Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice," and Alonzo says to Sebastian, "Prithee no more : thou dost talk nothing to me." In one of these Plays, *Romeo and Juliet*, this young man was the only important Character added to those in the original story. Since Shakespeare was writing for a particular Company it is safe to conclude that he had a particular Player in mind when he provided those parts. And if we accept Dryden's statement as proving that he acted Mercutio we can infer that he wrote them all for himself.

Dryden wrote in an Essay printed in 1672 that Shakespeare "showed the best of his skill as a delineator of gentle-

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

men in his Mercutio," and that he said that he was forced to kill him in the third Act to prevent being killed by him. He added, "But for my part, I cannot find he was so dangerous a person : I see nothing in him but what was so exceedingly harmless, that he might have lived to the end of the Play, and died in his bed, without offence to any man." This alleged saying of Shakespeare's would be explained only if he had acted Mercutio and had killed him because he found the effort exhausting. It so happens that the other varieties of Proteus-Mercutio demand less exertion ; they are all minor parts, even Proteus, for he is drawn without passion. And this is true also of the two other parts ascribed to him by legends, the Ghost in *Hamlet* and the Servant Old Adam in *As You Like It*, while the three Kings, whose parts he may have taken, were pathetic spectators.

It is natural that a young man beginning to write Fiction of any kind should draw himself often (even if he has no such intention) because he knows less about others than his elders have learnt and because his own nature is still the most important to him. So Shakespeare may have drawn himself oftenest when he was beginning to write, and above all in his Comedies, since he was too young to know how he would bear himself in a Tragical moment. I think that he drew himself as Mercutio, though with the difference that Mercutio would not have been easily tired. If he did, he was content with his singing (as Crispinus was), for Mercutio sings the only song in the Play.

This picture seems the more likely since this Character governs the Italianate Comedies : Mercutio might have written them all.

If, like Mercutio, Shakespeare exhibited a gay affectation when he was young, he imitated the prevalent mode : for instance, Philip Sidney surpassed the other courtiers in this, and Richard Topcliffe, the Priest-hunter, in a letter which seems to have been written about 1597 (though the *Calendar of State Papers* sets it in 1583) wrote of Father John Gerard that he was "Kewyroos in Speetche, if he do now continue his custom, and in his Speetche he flowerethe and smyles much and a faltering and lispig and doubling his Tongue in his Speetche." This affectation did not imply that a



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man's heart was unmanly : Sidney died gallantly and Gerard endured Torture heroically and Southampton and many more who had affected an effeminate grace when they were young ended as soldiers. Even if Shakespeare shared Mercutio's grace when he was young, we know from his Tragedies that he was great-hearted (as Mercutio was) for no one can write nobly if his life is ignoble.

If we can conclude that he resembled Mercutio we have the more reason to trust the Ely House Portrait and the less to believe the stories which seem to have been current at Stratford after his time. These may have been invented when strangers began to show curiosity. John Dowdall's visit to Stratford, the first of which we have any record, was paid a hundred years after Shakespeare became prominent as a poet in London.

In any case few of these stories have any claim to be trusted. They are all based on gossip recorded by Aubrey in his *Lives of Eminent Men*, completed in 1680, and by Nicholas Rowe in his *Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespeare*, printed in 1709, and in some notes written by men of whom so little is known that it is impossible to judge their veracity. John Aubrey's account has most weight, though this is not saying much, for he was often wildly inaccurate. He professed to rely on some old men who may have seen Shakespeare and on two Actors, one of whom, William Beeston, was the son of a man who must have known him when he worked on the Stage.

John Aubrey wrote : "Mr. William Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon in the County of Warwick : his father was a butcher, and I have been told heretofore by some of his neighbours that, when he was a boy, he exercised his father's trade, but when he killed a calf he would do it in a high style and make a speech. . . . This William, being naturally inclined to Poetry and Acting, came to London, I guess about eighteen, and was an Actor at one of the Playhouses and did act exceedingly well. . . . He began early to make essays at Dramatic Poetry, which at that time was very low, and his Plays took well. He was a handsome, well-shaped man, very good company and of a very ready

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and pleasant smooth wit. . . . He was wont to go to his native country once a year. . . . Though Ben Jonson says of him, that he had little Latin and less Greek, he understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger days a school-master in the country. From Mr. Beeston."

About thirty years later Nicholas Rowe published his *Account*, which was compiled mainly from gossip collected by Thomas Betterton, of whom he wrote, "I must own a particular obligation to him for the most considerable part of the passages relating to the life, which I have transmitted to the Public; his veneration for the memory of Shakespeare having engaged him to make a journey into Warwickshire, on purpose to gather up what remains he could of a name for which he had so great a veneration." Thomas Betterton, who seems to have been aged seventy-four in 1709, showed his veneration by trusting all the gossip he heard.

Nicholas Rowe recorded of Shakespeare: "He had by a misfortune, common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company; and, amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy of Charl-cote near Stratford." And Richard Davies, who was Vicar of Sapperton in Gloucestershire and therefore in touch with local traditions, added some notes before 1708 to others written by William Fulman before 1688, "much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits from Sir — Lucy, who had him oft whipped and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native county to his great advancement, but his revenge was so great that he is his Justice Clodpate and calls him a great man and that in allusion to his name bore three louces rampant for his Arms. . . . He died a Papist." The Vicar of Sapperton seems to have known as little of Shakespeare's Works as did John Ward, the Vicar of Stratford from 1662 to 1668, who added to his gossip the note: "Remember to peruse Shakespeare's Plays, and be versed in them, that I may not be found ignorant in that matter."

John Dowdall did not mention the poaching when he wrote of his visit to Stratford in 1693: "The Clerk that showed me over this church is over eighty years old; he

## SIR THOMAS LUCY AND SHALLOW

says that this Shakespeare was formerly in this town bound apprentice to a butcher, but that he ran from his master to London and there was received into the Playhouse as a servitor, and by this means had an opportunity to be what he afterwards proved." If this old Clerk was William Castle, who died in 1701, the tale of the poaching cannot be traced to him unless Thomas Betterton visited Stratford eight years at least before Nicholas Rowe published it. In any case Castle would have been speaking of things which happened long before he was born in 1614, according to Sir Sidney Lee, or in 1628, according to Mr. Halliwell-Phillips. This would account for his forgetting the fact that there was no park at Charlote House in those days.

This story may have been founded on the notion that Shakespeare caricatured the Sir Thomas Lucy who died in 1600 as Shallow. A note probably written by William Towers in 1657 says of him and Ben Jonson, "They wrote in their neighbours' dialect and brought their birth-place on the Stage. They gathered humours from all kinds of people. Dogberry was a constable at Hendon. Shallow was Lucy with additions and variations." This note does not seem accurate, for the statement that Dogberry was drawn from a Constable at Hendon near London may be a hazy remembrance of the tradition that the Constable lived at Grendon in Buckinghamshire. And that story is doubtful since Ben Jonson's assertion in *Bartholomew Fair* that the Watch with mistaking words was a Stage-practice seems to show that the Watchman was a traditional Butt, like the Policeman in the Harlequinade of a modern Pantomime. The Watchmen were constantly derided in books, for instance in William Bullein's account of them in a *Dialogue against the Pestilence*, printed in 1564, and in Dekker's *Gull's Horn Book*, printed in 1609.

During Shakespeare's life Charlote House near Stratford-on-Avon was owned by three Justices named Sir Thomas Lucy: the first of them died in 1600, aged sixty-eight; the second died in 1605, aged fifty-four; and the third was nineteen years younger than Shakespeare. The third bought the park at Fulbrooke in Gloucestershire in which (according to the local tradition) Shakespeare went poaching. And the

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third made a Star-chamber matter of stealing deer from this Park in 1608.

The only possible link between the first of these three Lucys and Shallow is the stale jest about the dozen white louces. According to Fernes' *Blazon of Gentry*, printed in 1586, the Arms of the Lucys were "*Gules, three Lucies hauriant, argent.*" If this jest referred to him it must have been meant to amuse the people of Stratford in a local performance, for the Londoners could not have known a country Justice's Arms and might have thought that this mocked some better-known man, such as the Earl of Northumberland, who bore the White Lucs, if they had given any meaning to it. This jest is not to be found in the Quarto of 1602 which was reprinted in 1619 though that form begins with the words, "Ne'er tell me. I'll make a Star-chamber matter of it. The Council shall hear of it." This would be explained if it was omitted in London because it had no point there. Or it may show that this jest was added after the third Sir Thomas Lucy had followed Shallow's example about the Star-chamber matter.

None of the stories explains which Sir Thomas Lucy was meant. Perhaps the men who had recorded them thought (like some modern students) that there had only been one Knight of this name. The first Sir Thomas was mainly renowned in Warwickshire, where he busied himself in persecuting his neighbours; the second did little and only owned Charlchote for five years; the third was well known in London and was a Member of Parliament for Warwickshire for seven years, including the one in which he died, 1640. The note ascribed to William Towers was written about seventeen years after the third Sir Thomas had died, and the man who wrote it may have only known him by name and may have referred to him, not to his forgotten grandfather. And this may have been right if the jest about the Lucs was added after 1608, or if the Quarto ought to be dated 1619.

There may be a clue in the fact that Shallow's young cousin Slender had "a little yellow beard—a cane-coloured beard." The third Sir Thomas is shown in his two portraits at Charlchote with a peaked yellow beard, and Slender resembles the other Falstaff's account of the other old Justice



## SIR THOMAS LUCY AND SHALLOW

Shallow as he had been in his Youth. It might be argued from this that the Lucys resembled Slender in Youth and Shallow when they were old, but their effigies are not like Justice Shallow. The first Sir Thomas is shown in Charlcote Church resembling the Justice described in *As You Like It*,

With eyes severe and beard of formal cut.

If it shows him as he was when he died, he had no resemblance to Shallow when *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written.

Even if Shakespeare had meant to depict this Sir Thomas Lucy with a good-humoured ridicule (not of the kind which would have been inspired by old beatings) there might have been other reasons for this, for instance, the fact that this Sir Thomas had prosecuted Arden of Parkhall in 1583 and had been one of the Justices who presented John Shakespeare in the Recusant List of 1592. If this Sir Thomas drove Shakespeare from Stratford it might have been for rash words in defence of Arden of Parkhall in 1583, and a vague remembrance of this (combined with the jest about the White Luces and the Star-chamber matter) might have led to the tradition about the poaching recorded by visitors a century afterwards.

The amount of the value which we ought to attach to family traditions is shown by the story recorded in Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott* as related by the owners of Charlcote and by a recent version of this, according to which Shakespeare was imprisoned at Charlcote for poaching in 1593 and delivered by Leicester. In 1593 Shakespeare was aged twenty-nine and was successful in London as a playwright and poet and Leicester had been dead for five years. And local traditions must be even less trustworthy than family ones.

I think that the first Justice Shallow (who may have been called Clodpate when the Play was first written) was the silly old man of the Traditional Stage who survives as the Pantaloon with the Policeman and the Clown and the Harlequin in Pantomimes still. This was the old Justice described in *As You Like It*:

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The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,  
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,  
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,  
Turning again towards childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound.

And no one has suggested that Jaques was jeering at Lucy.

Our Harlequinades are the oldest form of the Drama to be seen in our time. The Harlequin, whose name has been traced through the jesting Arlecchino of Italy to the French Hierlechin (who seems to have begun as a demon, Harlequinus) resembles the humorous Devils of the Mummers and the Morality Plays. Our comic Policeman is the traditional Constable and our Pantaloon the silly old man who were always natural butts. Our Clown is (as his name shows) the Rustic who began as a butt, like Falstaff's recruits, and then grew facetious; and he still wears the clothes described by Ben Jonson in his *Particular Entertainment of the Queen and the Prince*, acted at Althorp in 1603 and printed in 1616. In that *Entertainment* Ben Jonson wrote: "There was a speech suddenly thought on to induce a Morrice of the clowns thereabout, who most officiously presented themselves, but by reason of the throng of the country that came in, their speaker could not be heard, who was in the person of Nobody, to deliver the following speech, and attired in a pair of breeches which were made to come to his neck with his arms out at his pockets and a cap drowning his face."

The Harlequinades seem to have sprung from the *Fabulæ Atellanæ* of Rome in which there were four conventional Characters, Pappus, the old father, Maccus, the fool, Bucco, the fat man, and Dossenus, the glutton. And whether our Harlequinade came from Italy or not it combines four of England's Comical figures. Shakespeare used at least three of them, the Pantaloon, the Clown and the Constable, making them living men in the same way as (I think) he took the fat old man of usual Comedies and transformed him to Falstaff, and he may have employed another, the Harlequin, in a form of *Othello* if it is true that Iago was acted by a Comedian,

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for in that case Iago must have resembled the old mocking Devils of the Morality Plays. But we cannot infer that he drew Dogberry because he was arrested for some crime in his Youth. He may have drawn him and Shallow to suit Kemp, who succeeded as Dogberry and was represented in the *Return from Parnassus*, offering to teach Studioso how to act "a foolish Mayor or a foolish Justice of the Peace."

The question whether he drew the first Sir Thomas Lucy as Shallow is only of interest because it denotes the worth of local traditions. Another story (which may have been invented in London long after his time and then adopted as a local tradition) is a still better instance of them. According to this one, which was first told in 1762 in the *British Magazine* and appears to have been developed by Ireland, whose Confessions were printed in 1805, "Our Poet" (according to Ireland's version) "was extremely fond of drinking hearty draughts of English Ale and gloried in being thought a person of superior eminence in that profession," and the toppers of Bidford, "hearing the fame of our Bard, challenged him and his companions to drink, . . . in little time our Bard and his companions got so intolerably intoxicated that they were not able to contend any longer, and accordingly set out on their return to Stratford, but had not got above half a mile on the road e'er they found themselves unable to proceed any farther and were obliged to lie under a Crab-tree, which is still growing by the side of the road, where they took up their repose till morning, when some of the Company roused the Poet and entreated him to return to Bidford and renew the contest, he declined it, saying I have drank with Piping Peabworth, Dancing Marston, Haunted Hillborough, Hungry Grafton, Dadging Exhill, Papist Wicksford, Beggarly Broom and Drunken Bidford." When this story was published, one hundred and forty-two years after Shakespeare's death, there was an old Crab-tree by the side of the road near Bidford. And though there were Crab-trees by every road in the neighbourhood in that county of orchards, Malone and many other students accepted that as sufficient ground for believing this ridiculous lie.

If there had been any truth in this tale it is probable

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that others resembling it would have been told of Shakespeare's doings in London; but neither Greene nor anyone else accused him of drunkenness or rioting there, and if we could be certain that he was caricatured as Crispinus this would prove that his faults were of a different kind.

The students who have accepted these stories may have been misled by the Bust at Stratford-on-Avon. The man shown in the Bust might have fallen into ill company when he was young (as Rowe says that Shakespeare did "by a misfortune common enough to young fellows"), he might have begun life as a butcher and, indeed, might have ended it prospering in that useful employment, and he might have indulged in drinking-bouts with his equals, though not with the Rustics, in his elderly days.

The man shown in the Ely House Portrait and the Droeshout Engraving could have been guilty of many faults in his time, but not of vulgar offences. He could have left Stratford-on-Avon (as Aubrey recorded that Shakespeare did) because he was naturally inclined to Poetry and Acting and also because that quiet place appeared too dull in his Youth and because the Stage afforded a scope for his young vanity, but not because he had been often beaten for poaching. He could have begun as a schoolmaster (as Aubrey recorded that Shakespeare did), but he could not have enjoyed killing a calf. And all this can be said of the man visible in the Poems and Plays.

A boy who had the makings of Mercutio in him would have been unfit for the stolid life of Stratford-on-Avon, and if he had been accustomed to find pleasure in thinking that he had a right to assert a fallen gentility, he would have been the more eager to escape from the prospect of earning a livelihood by shopkeeping there. Shakespeare wrote in his *Sonnets* as a man who had been lamed by misfortune and condemned to a trade which was humiliating to him :

Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there  
And made myself a motley to the view,  
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear. . . .

O, for my sake, do you with Fortune chide,  
The guilty Goddess of my harmful deeds,



## SHAKESPEARE'S CLAIM TO GENTILITY

That did not better for my life provide  
Than public means which public manners breeds.  
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,  
And almost thence my nature is subdued  
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand :  
Pity me then and wish I were renewed.

This recognition that his employment degraded him is supported by the Verses inscribed *To Our English Terence, Mr. Will Shakespeare*, which John Davies printed in 1610 in his *Scourge of Folly* :

Some say, good Will, which I in sport do sing,  
Hadst thou not played some kingly parts in sport,  
Thou hadst been a companion for a King  
And been a King among the meaner sort ;  
Some others rail, but rail as they think fit,  
Thou hadst no railing but a reigning wit.

Ben Jonson was one of those who railed if he mocked Shakespeare when he wrote his description of the Arms of Crispinus. Such mockery would have been natural to Londoners who remembered that Shakespeare was a son of a yeoman, but if they had known more about Warwickshire they would have discovered that this could not disprove a claim to Knightly descent.

In those days the yeomen of England kept their old rank. Sir Thomas Smith wrote in *De Republica Anglorum*, printed in 1583 but written in 1565 : " Those whom we call yeomen, next under the nobility, knights and squires have the greatest charge and doings in the Commonwealth, or rather are more travailed to serve it than all the rest ; as shall appear hereafter. I call him a yeoman whom our Laws do call *legalem hominem*, a word familiar in Writs and Inquests, which is a freeman born English and may dispend of his own free land in yearly revenue to the sum of forty Shillings sterling : this maketh (if the just value were taken now to the proportion of monies) six Pounds of our current money at this present." He adds that these yeomen " confess themselves to be no gentlemen," but often " come to such wealth that they are able and daily do buy the lands of

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unthrifty gentlemen, and after setting their sons to the school at the Universities, to the Laws of the Realm, or otherwise leaving them sufficient lands whereon they may live without labour, do make their said sons by those means gentlemen." And he ranks them above the fourth sort or class, which included "day-labourers, poor husbandmen, yea, merchants and retailers which have no free land."

A Grant of Arms by the Heralds was merely a recognition of rank; and all who studied (or pretended to study) at Oxford or Cambridge or the Inns of Court could call themselves gentlemen without paying for one. Sir Thomas Smith wrote: "As for gentlemen they be made good cheap in England. For whosoever studieth the Laws of the Realm, who studieth in the Universities, who professeth liberal Sciences, and to be short, who can live idly and without manual labour, and will bear the port, charge and countenance of a gentleman, he shall be called Master, for that is the title which men give to Esquires and other gentlemen, and shall be taken for a gentleman, for true it is with us, as is said, *Tanti eris aliis quanti tibi feceris*. And (if need be) a King of Heralds shall also give him for money Arms newly-made and invented, the title whereof shall pretend to have been found by the said Herald in perusing and viewing of old Registers."

Sir Thomas Overbury wrote of a Franklin in his *Characters*, printed in 1614: "His outside is an ancient yeoman of England, though his inside may give Arms with the best gentlemen and ne'er see the Herald." And John Stephens wrote of a Farmer in his *Essays and Characters*, printed in 1616: "To purchase Arms (if he emulates gentry) sits upon him like an ague; it breaks his sleep, takes away his stomach, and he can never be quiet till the Herald hath given him the harrow, the cuckoo, or some ridiculous emblem for his Armoury."

The Arms borne by the yeomen were not always new-fangled, for several of these families claimed Knightly descent though they had inherited a dwindled estate or a younger son's portion. We know that several families of yeomen in Warwickshire bore Arms in those days. Though we do not know whether Robert Arden of Wilmcote, Shakespeare's maternal grandfather, bore Arms, it is probable that he had

## STRATFORD-ON-AVON

a right to them, for he seems to have been descended from a brother of Sir John Arden, the ancestor of the Ardens of Parkhall. For all we know, the many Shakespeares who lived as yeomen in Warwickshire may have sprung from a family which had borne Arms, "non sans droict." In any case Shakespeare may have thought that his descent from the Ardens of the Forest of Arden gave him many proud Ancestors, including the mythical Guy of Warwick. And it may be that a claim to an illustrious Ancestry, or a belief in one, did more to control his life than anything else. This seems borne out if we recall our knowledge of his private affairs apart from the tales which may have been invented at random after his time. And it would go far to prove that some of those tales must have been false.

Stratford-on-Avon was then a little town in the fields (*emporium non inelegans*, according to Camden) beside the slow Avon, a narrow river winding in reeds. The people who lived in it were woodlanders still, for their stock had been moulded by the Forest of Arden, which had been a British haven of refuge in the days of the Romans and a stronghold of the Danes when these parts were in the Kingdom of Mercia. In those days many who lived in the quiet places of England never strayed more than a few miles from the houses in which they had been born. Stratford-on-Avon was one of the quietest of those quiet places and the home of a stock which had been permanent there from time immemorial. There may have been a Danish strain in it still, and this would account for the use of the name Hamnet or Hamlet. Even to-day the ancient strains can often be traced in England; for instance, in Beer, a seaside village in Devon which was called Beor by the Danes, most of the fishermen still seem to be Danish while in the neighbouring town of Lyme Regis in Dorset the old stock is patently Celtic. If Shakespeare had reddish hair and a high colour, as the Bust seems to show, these may have been signs of a Scandinavian descent. His martial name cannot help us to guess the source of his stock, for it may have meant Hawkspur first, which would explain why his crest was a Falcon holding a spear.

Stratford-on-Avon stood apart, as the other towns of

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

England did then : its inhabitants all knew one another and cared little about anyone whose days were not spent within sound of the chimes of Holy Trinity Church. That stately Church standing in the elms by the Avon was a token of Stratford's ancient renown for piety in the Catholic times. And though that renown had passed away when the Guild of the Holy Cross was broken, the townsmen were still proud of their home. There a man who owned a prosperous shop or a few acres of land was much more respected than any neighbouring Squire and quite as aware of his own importance and worth.

Nicholas Rowe recorded of Shakespeare : "He was the son of Mr. John Shakespeare, and was born at Stratford-on-Avon, in Warwickshire, in April, 1564. His family, as appears by the Register and public writings relating to that town, were of good figure and fashion there, and are mentioned as gentlemen. His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool, had so large a family, ten children in all, that though he was his eldest son he could give him no better education than his own employment. He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free-school, where it is probable he acquired what Latin he was master of ; but the narrowness of his circumstances and the want of his assistance at home forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language."

We do not know when Shakespeare was born, but his baptism was registered at Stratford-on-Avon on April the twenty-sixth, 1564. It is probable that he had his teaching at the Grammar-School there, and this might have been short if he was idle at lessons or was never robust. He seems to have learnt little from books then or at any time : the ways of the living were always much more to him than the thoughts of the dead. Indeed, there is no sign that he ever paid attention to books, except to Ovid's and Chaucer's Works and some of the English Plays and Poems and Stories and some Italian Novels when he was young, and some English Chronicles later, and to Plutarch's Lives in North's version, and perhaps to the younger Seneca's Tragedies and Philosophical Works, when he was elderly. And all these happened to be books which he used when he was writing his own.



## SHAKESPEARE AND BOOKS

He must have learnt some Latin in boyhood, and he may have increased his knowledge of it afterwards because it was still the International language and so commonly used that some of the townsmen of Stratford corresponded in it. That knowledge may have helped him to learn a smattering of French and Italian. Though he had a weakness for using legal phrases at random he had no knowledge of Law. (Since some lawyers have held an opposite view I ought, perhaps, to explain that I do not differ from them in ignorance, for their trade has been mine.) He did not prove a profound knowledge of Law when he wrote in a Sonnet,

And Summer's lease hath all too short a date.

When he needed any knowledge of History he copied the Chronicles, and when he dealt with Geography he preferred to invent it. Perhaps he could have said with Biron,

Study is like the Heaven's glorious Sun  
That will not be deep searched with saucy looks :  
Small have continual plodders ever won  
Save base authority from others' books.

Dryden wrote of him in the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, "He was naturally learned : he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature : he looked inwards and found her there."

If Shakespeare had cared for books it is probable that he would have gathered a few and that these would have been treasured in remembrance of him after his time, but there is no mention of any in his Will and no sign that any of his were in the "study of books" left by his son-in-law. The man seen in the Plays looked on the World with an insatiate curiosity always—delighting most in the things which were the most alien to him. Such a man might have begun as a boy who was glad to escape from School as soon as he could.

There were times when the tranquillity of Stratford was broken by glimpses of a different life. Kenilworth Castle and Warwick Castle were near, and there was apt to be a going and coming of strangers who were bound for their Revels or returning from them. He was eleven when Queen Elizabeth saw the famous Revels at Kenilworth in 1575, and since most of the people of the neighbouring parts assembled

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

there it is probable that he, who was destined to attempt to amuse her among the least of her servants, gaped at her then as a little boy in the crowd. And he had glimpses, too, of the Players and their similar world of sham glory and pretended delight. He was about four when they were welcomed to Stratford while John Shakespeare was Bailiff; and after this they performed there, for instance, in 1573, 1576, 1577, 1579, and the four following years.

We can be certain that many little boys in such towns were dazzled when the Players from London rode up the narrow streets in the splendour of their second-hand finery, breaking the habitual somnolence with their trumpets and drums, and that they believed that there could not be a happier lot than to travel thus, admired and applauded, and with the power to excite laughter or tears. Many such boys must have felt that this happiness was out of their reach, for they could not emulate the wit of the Clowns or the stateliness of the Lovers and Kings. If Shakespeare had been a dull little boy and had known that his family had been always content tilling the fields or plying homely trades connected with farming, he too might have sighed and returned to an inherited obscurity sadly. But he was never dull, and if he believed (rightly or wrongly) that he was descended from illustrious people he might have felt himself too fine for the usual ambitions of Stratford: he would have valued their former eminence more because he did not inherit it, and it may be that when he dealt in his Plays with fallen Dukes he was echoing that boyish belief. It may be that when he sat in the Grammar-School he was haunted by visions of the Plays witnessed there or in a neighbouring room, which was the Guildhall, and of future ones when his eloquence and wit would astonish the wisest men in Stratford-on-Avon. And it may be that the Players were his teachers of History.

If so, they were helped by other teachers, the venerable persons who told tales of the Past. When he was aged six, people aged fifty could remember the days before the change called the Reformation began, and others aged seventy or more could describe the times when England was governed by King Henry the Seventh, and there were many whose

## THE WOODLAND OF ARDEN

grandfathers had seen the Wars of the Roses. Perhaps the old people talking of the days of their Youth taught him to think of England's Catholic Past as a better and a happier time. If they did, they could have cited the testimony of King Henry the Eighth, who said when he opened his last Parliament in 1545 : " Of this I am sure that Charity was never so faint among you ; and God Himself, among Christians, was never less revered, honoured and served " ; and of Bishop Hugh Latimer, who said in 1548 in his Sermon of the Plough : " In times past, men were full of pity and compassion, but now there is no pity ; for in London their brother shall die in the streets for cold, he shall lie sick at the door, between stock and stock, I cannot tell what to call it, and perish there for hunger : was there ever more unmercifulness in Nebo ? . . . Now Charity is waxen cold, none helpeth the scholar nor yet the poor."

Such lessons may have taught him to write as he did in the *Sonnets* of " the holy antique days," and as he did when in *As You Like It* he made Orlando say of Old Adam,

O good old man, how well in thee appears  
The constant service of the antique world,

or when in the same Play he made Charles report that in the Forest of Arden the Duke and his merry men " fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden World."

The old Forest of Arden had dwindled to the Woodland of Arden in a neighbouring parish. Camden wrote of it in *Britannia*, printed in 1582 : " Sylvestrem regionem nunc perlustremus, quæ trans Avonam flumen ad Septentriones expanditur spatio multi maiori, maximam partem nemoribus infessa, nec tamen sine pascuis, arvis et variis ferri venis. Hæc ut hodie Woodland, id est, Regio Sylvestris, ita etiam Arden antiquiori nomine olim dicebatur."

This Woodland of Arden must have been one of Shakespeare's haunts in his boyhood. There he could have played truant or devoted his holidays to delightful adventures in the dusk of the trees. These imaginary adventures were echoed in the terrible doings of *Titus Andronicus* and in the happiness and merriment marked by the melancholy Jaques in the

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pleasant Forest of Arden, a home of outlaws, "nec tamen sine pascuis, arvis."

Shakespeare must have been always of imagination all compact, like the Lunatics and Lovers and Poets of whom he wrote in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and this would have made him restless and excited by glimpses of the wonderful World beyond the bounds of his home. He must have been always given to dreams, and it may be that one of them was inspired by the sight of an old ruinous house close to the Grammar-School and built by Sir Hugh Clopton, who had returned to these parts after he had been Lord Mayor of London. If, when he should have been at work in the School, he had a vision of escaping from Stratford and of earning money and fame not to be found there and of buying that house and of ending his days in it and of being commemorated by a tomb as admired as Hugh Clopton's, it was a natural dream and one which was destined to come true. And indeed it appears safe to infer that dream from his story. He may have always held as he did when he wrote *The Rape of Lucrece* :

The aim of all is but to nurse this life  
With honour, wealth and ease in waning age.

It might be well if students would agree to conclude that like most other people he often did the natural thing. For instance, his wish to secure the modest rank of a gentleman was a natural one, particularly if he believed that he was descended from Knights; and if he took pride in it (as seems to be shown by his bequest of his sword, the sign of that rank) he behaved in this as everyone else would have done then. And for a boy who was fond of Acting and Poetry (as he must have been and as Aubrey wrote that he was), there could have been nothing more natural than joining the Players. He may have tried the part of an usher in a neighbouring school first (as Aubrey recorded), but this could have brought him neither money nor fame. A Player's life, transfigured to him as it must have been in his happy glimpses of it, offered him a chance of becoming rich and admired and of meanwhile observing the strange ways of the Londoners or riding at ease all over England in Summer-time, heralded



## SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE AS A PLAYER

by trumpets and drums. He had in his heart the stuff of which Kings and heroes ought to be made, but he could only wear the Crown of his dreams in the imaginary Realm of the Theatre.

It would have been natural to begin this delightful life as soon as he could. Dowdall's assertion that he had been a butcher's apprentice and ran from his master to London and there was received into the Play-House as a servitor seems to indicate a local belief that he was very young when he went. Such a belief would be supported by Rowe's statement, that "he was received into the Company then in being in a very mean rank," and by the tradition preserved by Edmund Malone in 1780, according to which "his first office in the theatre was that of a prompter's attendant."

It would be supported, too, by the story recorded by Johnson, according to which he began as a horse-boy at the door of the theatre, if we could accept it, but this is plainly untrue. The education received at the Grammar-School, though it may have been scant, would have secured him better-paid work in those illiterate days, and he could have made friends with the Players when they visited Stratford, and so have obtained employment more to his mind. Besides, his claim to gentility would have turned him from this. If the horse-boys were called "Shakespeare's boys," as Johnson alleged, this may have been because he employed them when he worked for the Stage, making money by this as Burbage did when he provided the horses. It may be that he was thinking of himself when he wrote in *As You Like It*,

At seventeen many their fortunes seek.

This would agree with Aubrey's account that "he came to London, I guess, about eighteen."

The only other things known about him before 1592, when Greene attacked Shake-scene in *A Groat'sworth of Wit*, are that in May, 1583, the baptism of his daughter Susanna was registered in Holy Trinity Church, and that the baptisms of his two other children, the twins Hamnet and Judith, were registered there in February, 1585, and that he joined his father in a legal conveyance in 1587. We do not know when or where he was married; but if a marriage-bond, dated

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

November the twenty-fifth, 1582, is genuine and connected with him, this may mean that he had been married illegally (as, for instance, the Catholics often were), for his daughter Susanna was probably born in May, 1583.

There is nothing to show that he did not begin to work with the Players before he was married. If he joined them first he showed common sense in postponing his marriage till he was earning a livelihood. In any case his age when he married was the usual one for marriages then. And he showed common sense, too, if he left his wife and children in Stratford, where they could live cheaply among friends and relations, instead of making them share his London life or his wanderings when his Company travelled. We have no proof that he took this natural course, and if he did we have no reason to doubt that he often visited them. The journey was easy: a couple of days' jogging ride through the open fields, with a rest in the seclusion of Oxford, would have brought him to Clopton's low bridge over the Avon and the tall wooden spire of Holy Trinity Church. A person so insignificant could have been there constantly without any mention of the fact in the Records, and Aubrey asserted that "he was wont to go to his native country once a year." Such visits would have been natural if he had shown an average fondness for his wife and his children, and he is seen in his Plays as one who could have said with Macduff,

I cannot but remember such things were  
That were most precious to me.

When he joined the Players he may well have begun in some mean employment, as a call-boy, for instance (as the tradition recorded by Malone asserts), while he was learning his trade, but there must have been scope for a youth who was fit to act the part of a gentleman. And if the Ely House Portrait is genuine he probably looked girlish enough to take the feminine parts. Such a recruit must have been valuable, for few of the Players had any claim to refinement.

He was about twenty-eight when Robert Greene attacked Shake-scene in his *Groat'sworth of Wit*. Henry Chettle wrote in his *Kind Heart's Dream*, which was entered in the Stationers' Register on the eighth of December, 1592: "About three

## SHAKESPEARE IN LONDON

months since died M. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry booksellers' hands, among other his *Groat'sworth of Wit*, in which a letter written to divers Playmakers is offensively by one or two of them taken ; and because on the dead they cannot be avenged, they wilfully forge in their conceits a living author ; and after tossing it to and fro, no remedy but it must light on me. . . . With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them I care not if I never be. The other, whom at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that, as I have moderated the heat of living writers and might have used my own discretion—especially in such a case, the author being dead—that I did not I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself I have seen his demeanour no less civil, than he excellent in the quality he professes, besides divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his wit." Though Shakespeare was not one of the Play-makers to whom the *Groat'sworth of Wit* was addressed this apology may have been offered to him.

The insults to Shake-scene may prove that Shakespeare succeeded first as a Player and afterwards as a writer of Plays of every variety before 1592, and may assert that he considered himself the best of the dramatists and the allusions to buckram gentlemen and peasants may mean that the upstart crow was a Rustic who affected gentility. If the apology was intended for him it proves that he was apt to resent insults and punish them.

Apart from this we have no means of knowing what anyone thought of Shakespeare while he was living in London. The notion that he was considered unusually gentle and sweet seems based on the fact that Ben Jonson wrote in the Verses prefixed to the First Folio :

Thy art,

My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part,

and called him " Sweet Swan of Avon," and said in *Discoveries* that he had " brave notions and gentle expressions." He may have used the word " gentle " in its old meaning " courteous," employed, for instance, by Chaucer in his account of his Knight, and when he made his Host say to the Shipman,

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Now long may thou sail by the coast  
Sir, gentil master, gentil mariner.

He seems to have used "brave" in a sense nearer its French origin than it conveys to us now when he applied it to notions. In any case, "gentle" and "sweet" were common terms of address used with no particular meaning. When, for instance, in the third Act of *Poetaster* Crispinus addressed Horace as "Sweet Horace" and "Gentle Horace," he did not assert that the obstreperous Jonson-Horace was either gentle or sweet. Jonson would have been the last to apply these terms to himself or to consider them praise. So, too, when Shakespeare was called "sweet" in the *Return from Parnassus* the epithet was not intended for praise, and it referred to his Poems as when Weever called him "honey-tongued Shakespeare," in 1597. If he had always been gentle, Greene would not have called him a Tiger wrapped in a Player's hide, neither would Chettle have made haste to apologize when offence had been taken, nor would Thomas Heywood have written in the Postscript to his *Apology for Actors*, printed in 1612, about some of the Poems in the *Passionate Pilgrim*, "the author, I know, was much offended with Mr. Jaggard that (altogether unknown to him) presumed to make so bold with his name."

The only epithet which seems to be personal is the term "friendly," applied to him when Anthony Scoloker wrote, with some condescension, of "the vulgar's element, friendly Shakespeare's Tragedies." Friendliness is not so uncommon that there is any need to attach importance to this: it does not tell us so much as we are told when we learn that Marlowe was called haughty and kind. And even if we could take this as a sign that Shakespeare showed a particular friendliness we have no proof that he ever had a particular friend. In those days devoted friendships were common, but no one ever professed friendship with him except Heminge and Condell, who were his partners for many years, and Ben Jonson, whose tardy claim is open to doubt. No one seems to have called Fletcher friendly, but he lived on such terms with Beaumont that they had all things in common, even their clothes, and, after that beloved friend died, clung to



## SHAKESPEARE IN LONDON

Massinger with so much affection that (according to Sir Aston Cockayne) they were not divided in death, for they share the same grave. The fact that Shakespeare left the usual legacies to three of the Players and five of his townsmen and one man, Thomas Russell (who may have been a merchant in London), cannot be taken as showing that they were close friends of his. And if it was interpreted in that way it would prove that he did not count Jonson or any other author of those days as a friend dear enough to deserve such remembrance. The only other man named as a friend of his was John Davenant, a Vintner and Innkeeper at Oxford, of whom Antony à Wood recorded that he "was an admirer and lover of Plays and Play-makers," and was "of a melancholy disposition and was seldom or never seen to laugh." Shakespeare seems to have stopped at Davenant's Inn on his journeys between London and Stratford, and there is no sign that they met anywhere else.

We know very little about his London abodes. He seems to have lived for some years before 1596 in one of the houses built from the ruins of a Priory in St. Helens in Bishopsgate, and we only know this because he did his best to avoid paying his taxes. In 1596 he moved to the sinful Suburb of Southwark, near the Bear Garden. If he was living alone it is probable that these homes were in lodgings. The first one was not far from the Theatre in Shoreditch, and the other was near the Swan and Rose theatres and the field which was chosen for the site of the Globe in 1599. There is evidence that in 1604 he "lay in the house" of a wigmaker named Mount-joy, who had a shop in Silver Street in the City. Since there is no sign that he lodged there at any other time and no further evidence of his living in Southwark, this may mean that he only visited London in 1604, perhaps to walk in the King's Procession that year as one of his Servants.

It may be that while he was living in London he wrote his Plays in the hours which he could snatch from the Stage or from his chief pleasure, a delighted perusal of the ways of Mankind. Most of the English lived then by daylight. For instance, we read in William Harrison's *Description of England*, printed in 1577, that most people rose at dawn, dined about noon and had supper at five or six; and

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forty years later Nicholas Breton gave a similar account in *Fantastikes*. We know from Shakespeare's Poems and Plays that (like Dante) he was a lover of Dawn from the time when he wrote the beginning of *Venus and Adonis* in Youth till the night came when he could have echoed Antony's cry,

Oh Sun, thy uprise shall I see no more.

And he could have found no better time for his writing than in the early hours of the morning before the street-cries and interruptions began.

It is probable that he was described in one of Aubrey's notes : "The more to be admired q. he was not a company-keeper, lived in Shoreditch, would not be debauched, and if invited to writ he was in pain." Though this note is followed by the name W. Shakespeare, Sir Sidney Lee argues that it cannot refer to him, saying : "If Shakespeare were intended the words would mean that he avoided social dissipation, that he resided in Shoreditch and that the practice of writing caused him pain. None of these statements have any coherence with better attested information." We have no evidence that Shakespeare indulged in social dissipation in London ; he seems to have lived near Shoreditch first, and the words, "when invited to writ he was in pain," cannot mean that this man did not write with facility—they only assert that he was accustomed to write that he was in pain when he was invited to take part in debauchery.

This answer may have been humorous like the others recorded when he mocked Burbage, calling himself William the Conqueror, and referred to Ben Jonson's many translations from the writers of Rome, advising him to translate latten spoons, and when (if he was the poet described in *Nine Days' Wonder*) he sent Kemp to annoy him. And the vanity of which he was accused if he was drawn as Crispinus or as the author attacked in *Cynthia's Revels* or as Poet-Ape or as Shake-scene may have been also humorous and intended to mock duller companions, as Mercutio's was. It may have been like the apish humour ascribed to the penny poet by Kemp and equally apt to alienate its victims from him. Perhaps he could have said of himself with Chaucer in the *Rime of Sir Thopas* :

## SHAKESPEARE'S ATTITUDE

He seemeth elvish by his countenance.

But if he was painted in the Ely House Portrait the elfishness which may have been visible in him when he was younger, making him different from his stolid associates, and the vanity which may have repelled them had been hidden by weariness.

If he replied that he was in pain when he was invited to be debauched, this may show that he was often ailing in health and so could plead that excuse. This was probably true if we can trust the Ely House Portrait or the Droeshout Engraving, and it would help to account for the attitude to be seen in his Plays.

He wrote in them as if he was standing apart. In the Plays of his Youth and in his *Midsummer Dreams* he remembered the lost glamour of boyhood and of Rustical wonder, and in his darker Plays he looked on the World (as he confessed in the *Sonnets*) askance and strangely. He wrote of battles as if he had only seen them fought on the Stage, and of the Chase as if he had watched it pass by,

Much marked by the melancholy Jaques,

not as one who had ever found happiness in killing a rabbit: his heart went with the hunted hare and the wounded stag and the calf dragged to the slaughter. He wrote of the Sea with an instinctive alarm (natural enough in a woodlander from the middle of England), and when his people ventured on it they were almost sure to be wrecked. There is no sign that he had rivalled their courage, for his pictures of France and Italy are full of mistakes. He drew his sailors as ruffians (like the billows they sailed), and frequently drunk, which they probably were when he met them in the haunts of Iniquity where the theatres stood or tried to amuse them while they fought in the Pit. If he had known more of their life he would not have thought that the ship-boys were accustomed to sleep on the high and giddy masts (as he seems to do in the *Second Part of King Henry the Fourth*), or that the masts were high and giddy in days when few ships were as big as the *Golden Hind*, of a hundred tons.

He could not have observed everything, as we know that

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he did, if he had been prominent in action himself. Perhaps he could have said with Romeo,

I'll be a candle-holder and look on,

because the man who is looking on sees most of the game.

This aloof attitude may also denote that he bore himself with an air of fallen gentility, for this was a thing which would have kept him apart. And it may be that an outer inactivity made his imagination more restless. Sidney's life was adventurous, but in the *Arcadia* we find the inimitable note of serenity. Shakespeare's Plays were only serene when he rested in three quieter dreams, *As You Like It*, *The Tempest*, and the fourth Act of *The Winter's Tale*: the others are throbbing with an excited vitality.

Ill-health would also help to account for his retirement to Stratford and for his death before he was old. In 1596 he suffered a blow which must have darkened his life when his son Hamnet died, aged eleven. We know nothing of Hamnet, but a boy prematurely wise (as sickly boys often are) and doomed to premature death lives in some of the Plays; for instance, as a Prince in *King John* and in *King Richard the Third*, and as Macduff's son in *Macbeth*, and as Mamilius in *The Winter's Tale*. While the boy lived Shakespeare may have wanted more money because it would enable him to establish his stock in a position which Fortune had not granted to him. Now he had only to obtain a provision for himself and his wife and for the dowers of a couple of daughters, and this change may have lessened his interest in his work on the Stage. This seems to be indicated by the fact that he bought the old house in Stratford-on-Avon in the following year.

We do not know when he returned to make his home in Stratford-on-Avon. John Ward's statement that "he frequented the Plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived in Stratford and supplied the Stage with two Plays every year," does not support the common belief that he only returned to his home when he had finished his Plays. And that belief does not account for the change seen in his Plays after 1603. Gervinus, seeing that change, compromised by suggesting that he forsook his trade as a Player in 1603 but still lived in London till he had finished his Plays and then



## SHAKESPEARE AND STRATFORD

returned to Stratford to rest. Nicholas Rowe said that "the latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease and retirement and the conversation of his friends." This is one of the questions which we can only decide in accordance with our ideas of Shakespeare. I think that he is shown in his Plays as a man who would have valued the love of his family and the peace of his home. It is recorded that his family loved him, for, according to Dowdall, "his wife and daughters did earnestly desire to be laid in the same grave with him," and we have no reason to doubt that he returned their affection.

New Place, his last home at Stratford, seems to have been a rambling house of dim rooms with a long garden running down to the Avon. He bought stone for repairing it in 1598, and was described in that year in a local inventory as a householder in Chapel Street, owning a large stock of corn and malt, and in 1602 he bought about a hundred acres of arable land near Stratford. Though a lawyer named Greene, alias Shakespeare, who may have been a cousin of his, seems to have lived in the house in 1609, this cannot prove that Shakespeare had not made it his home, for the foundations show that there was plenty of room for hospitality in it.

There is nothing to show that he preferred to live in lodgings over a shop in London for many years after this pleasant home was ready for him in the kind air of Warwickshire and in the quiet which his fathers had loved and among men who had been children there when he was a child. Perhaps he could have said with Camoens :

Mas se o sereno ceo me concedera  
 Quelquer quieto, humilde e dolce estado,  
 Onde com minhas Musas so vivera  
 Sem ver-me em terra alheia degradado.

And he may have returned to the country in 1603, like Drayton, partly because the new King had brought changes which were not to his mind.

It is certain that he could have devoted himself to Tragical Work better if he was living away from the noises and interruptions of London and all the petty feuds of the men who jangled in the pot-houses there and delivered at last from the

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humiliating trade of the Stage. And it may be that the dignity and the burning emotion of his Tragical Work after 1603 are signs that he was living in peace.

We know little of Shakespeare's life at Stratford-on-Avon in his elderly days. John Ward's account of it, written between 1661 and 1663, must be inaccurate: he wrote: "He supplied the Stage with two Plays every year, and for this had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of a thousand a year, as I have heard." We can be certain that Plays were never bought at this price then, and though it is probable that Shakespeare was drawing an income from his share in his Company during "his elder days" and we know that he had other investments, he could not have spent a thousand a year in Stratford-on-Avon unless he had thrown his money out of the window.

This sum would have been equal to six thousand Pounds, at least, of our money, and we can be sure that Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlcote did not live at this rate. If a townsman with only a narrow garden behind his house had done it he must have been exceedingly generous, and there is no trace that Shakespeare made benefactions beyond his bequest of ten Pounds to the Poor of Stratford-on-Avon.

We can infer from some lawsuits that when he lent money (which was probably seldom) he took good care that it was repaid, and we know that the Corporation of Stratford had the pleasure of paying twenty pence for wine for a preacher who was entertained in his house in 1614. These things do not suggest a lavish manner of life. All we know of his investments appears to indicate a thriftiness natural in a man of his class, and this is also suggested by the letter about a loan from him, written by Abraham Sturley to Richard Quiney in 1598, and by Adrian Quiney's message to his son at that time: "If you bargain with William Shakespeare or receive money therefor, bring your money home that you may."

Shakespeare could not have worn rich clothes in Stratford, a little town which looked like a straggling farm and mainly consisted of two modest streets with streams running through them. Food was cheap there because it was the produce of

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the neighbouring farms. Even wine was not dear, and the bill for the preacher's entertainment may mean that no wine was kept in New Place. A man living at Stratford in a natural way could have spent little ; but Ward's legend may show that Shakespeare was thought rich (as the little town reckoned wealth), and we can infer from this that he was respected.

His trade and his father's must have debarred him from any equality with the Warwickshire Squires ; but he seems to have lived with the men of the highest rank in Stratford-on-Avon, and we can be sure that in those days (as in these) such men, who were shopkeepers in a prosperous way, did not consort with their less fortunate neighbours. But he may have been eccentric in this. He may have grown tired of their talk and dignity sometimes and found it pleasant to sit on a bench in front of an Inn in some woodland village, when he needed repose, and hear the slow wisdom of the neighbouring Rustics (what a relief after Ben Jonson's violent scholarship !), and he may even have drunk some of the honest Ale of those days in their delightful society. Such an outrage against the rigid conventions of an English market-town would explain the tales of drunken exploits with the rustical toppers, if they were current before they were recorded in London in 1762. Stratford seems to have been as given to gossip as such places commonly are, for in 1613 his daughter Susanna brought an action for slander against one of her neighbours. While it is true that there is no smoke without fire, it is also true that a little fire may cause a great smoke when all the substance is rubbish. Apart from this eccentricity, which cannot be proved, we have no reason to doubt that he lived in the dignity which he always desired.

It may be that he turned more to books, such as the younger Seneca's Philosophical Works, in these days because there was so little to do when he was not writing, and that he found a natural pleasure in the society of his wife and his children and after February, 1607-1608, of his grandchild, Elizabeth.

If he resembled Jaques more than Mercutio when he began to be elderly, or if the Ely House Portrait is genuine, he would have found the ancient tranquillity of Stratford delightful and would have haunted the old Woodland of

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Arden, seeking quietness there instead of imagining adventures in it, saying with Surrey,

And when I saw the World so pleasant all about,  
Lord ! to myself how glad I was that I had gotten out.

Warwickshire must have been pleasant to an exile returning, who had always remembered the dusk of the woody lanes by his home and the light on the many orchards in Spring and the scent of the bean-fields when the Summer was there. We can be sure that he could have said in these years with Abraham Cowley :

Ah ! wretched and most solitary he  
Who loves not his own company,

for he could not have lived in his Plays unless he had been often alone, and the talk of his neighbours would have been wasted on him when (though they did not see any change) he was Cleopatra, exclaiming,

I am again for Cydnus  
To meet Mark Antony.

If he had no intimate friends this may have been partly due to the fact that his imagination provided him with greater companions. In that case his loss was our gain, and so was his ill-health, if indeed he suffered from it, because it made him live in his dreams, and so was the ill-luck which condemned him to the trade of a mountebank. It may be that in the end he owed most to the things which must have seemed disadvantages. Because his education was scant his mind was not moulded by other men in his boyhood and his eyes were not dimmed and he did not learn to look on the World through the spectacles of the dead. Because he was debarred from other ambitions he was led to become his Country's proudest claim to remembrance, though this must have been hidden from him when he made himself a motley in London or in the Suburbs, or rode into country towns, heralded by trumpets and drums, to sue to their proud Mayors for permission to show Plays in the Town-halls. If he believed himself entitled by birth to a more dignified life, this was fortunate also, though it must have embittered his daily



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paths, for it helped him to live loftily, disdaining the Mob, without affectation, in the World of his Plays, and to speak greatly when he was illustrious there.

He was fortunate in other things, too. He began to write for the Stage when Lyly's and Peele's delightful Comedies had opened one path for him and Marlowe and Kyd had taught him how to write Tragedies, and in times when the Drama was still the literature of the illiterate, thrilling with England's national life. He was the last writer in touch with Chaucer and dealing, as Chaucer did, mainly with tales of an immemorial antiquity; and his was the last voice of the Strolling Players of England. He was fortunate, too, in growing to manhood at England's proudest time and in watching the coloured and vivid life of those days. England was still musical then—even the Rustics had their part-songs and Madrigals, and Peele could introduce Harvest-men in his *Old Wives' Tale*, singing,

All ye, that lovely lovers be,  
Pray you for me,  
Lo, here we come a sowing, a sowing, a sowing,  
And sow sweet fruits of love.

But the musical and mirth-loving England which Chaucer had known was passing away when Shakespeare turned to his Tragedies in the beginning of a different time. And it may be that in his last years at Stratford he had the more need to take refuge in the World of his Plays because, though his own lot was more pleasant, England was passing from the pride he had known to shame and calamity.

In those days (as in these) many Englishmen were apt to be neutral in Religious affairs or to be reticent about their beliefs. It may be that this national reticence is enough to explain why we cannot be sure whether he professed any Religion. It was then very common because there were many who had no wish to be martyrs. We cannot guess his Creed by debating whether his father was a Catholic Recusant or by concluding that his mother remained a Catholic because she was an Arden, for he would have decided such a thing for himself. Neither can we be guided by the fact that

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his baptism was registered in Holy Trinity Church or by the fact that he was buried in it, for these things could have happened in any case.

The Catholics were accustomed to register baptisms in the neighbouring Churches because it was compelled by the Law and they had no other Register. And if no Priest could be had in days when Priests were few and in hiding, Baptism there was valid to them. They buried their dead in the old Churches or Cemeteries (which were still consecrated ground in their eyes), because they had no others. Indeed, after 1610 they were liable to a fine if they buried their dead anywhere else. No Catholic would have been reluctant to choose a grave in Holy Trinity Church at the foot of the Altar where the Mass had been said for hundreds of years.

Shakespeare had a right to a grave in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church because in 1605 he bought a share in the leasehold of the tithes. It is probable that this place was renowned for a particular holiness, for it was the custom to bury the dead there for a time and then remove their bones to a Charnel-house, and this seems to have been only done when a church had some unusual privilege, as when it was believed that some of the earth in it had been brought from Jerusalem. This custom may explain why he protected his last rest with those Verses,

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear  
To dig the dust enclosed here :  
Blest be the man that spares these stones,  
And curst be he that moves my bones.

And it may be that the curse had more effect than he wished when (according to Dowdall) it prevented the burial of his widow and his two daughters with him, for the depth of the grave, seventeen feet, suggests that room was left for them there.

If we knew nothing about his private affairs it would be easy to infer from his Plays that he began as a Catholic. He wrote in them not merely with reverence for Friars and Nuns in a time when they were banned by the Law, but also with an intimate knowledge of the Catholic Church, which can only be recognised by students who share it. Some of his

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Catholic phrases have been misinterpreted, as, for instance, when Schmidt in his *Shakespeare Lexicon* said that Julia's words in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, "I see you have a month's mind to them," referred to a woman's longing for a particular food. The "month's mind" was merely the name first used for the month of remembrance during which daily Masses were offered for the souls of the dead, and now applied to the Mass said for them a month after death. Because the phrase meant a short remembrance it came to mean a passing affection, as when (according to the State Papers) John Chamberlain wrote to Dudley Carleton in 1613: "There is whispered that Count Henry of Nassau hath a month's mind for my lord of Northumberland's daughter."

Even when Shakespeare has been commonly taken as showing ignorance of Catholic ways he was correct, as when he wrote of Evening Mass in Verona, for Mass was sometimes said in the evening (as is recorded in Martene's *De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus*, printed in 1699), though this custom had been disapproved by Pope Pius the Fifth, who died in 1572.

This knowledge and attitude are all the more notable because they are not seen in the writings of other men who were Catholics during part of their lives, such as Lodge and Donne and Ben Jonson. This knowledge may be partly explained by the fact that his mind dwelt in the Past. Though he mirrored his times he never set his stories in them, unless we can take *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (in spite of its use of Falstaff's name) and the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew* as intended to belong to his day. If nearly all his Plays sprang from the Traditional Stage they were rooted in the Catholic times.

Froude wrote in his *History of England*: "Shakespeare's Plays were as much the offspring of the long generations who had pioneered his road for him as the discoveries of Newton were the offspring of those of Copernicus." And Carlyle wrote in his *Lectures on Heroes*: "In some sense it may be said that this glorious Elizabethan Era with its Shakespeare, as the outcome and flowerage of all which had preceded it, is itself attributable to the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. The Christian Faith, which was the theme of Dante's song,

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had produced the Practical Age which Shakespeare was to sing. For Religion then, as it now and always is, was the soul of Practice, the primary vital fact in men's life. And remark here, as rather curious, that Middle Age Catholicism was abolished, so far as Acts of Parliament could abolish it, before Shakespeare, the noblest product of it, made his appearance."

It was easy then to dwell in the Past, since London was little changed and Stratford was less. London Bridge was still garnished with grinning heads, pecked by the crows, prisoners still went to the Tower, and the gabled houses stooping above the cobbled streets were the same; while in Stratford-on-Avon the people lived mainly as their fathers had done for hundreds of years, spreading rushes on the floors of their rooms and using no forks (according to Coryat) and disliking all changes and very little affected by the invention of printed books, which few ever opened. Thirty years before Shakespeare was born the Pilgrims were still riding to Canterbury as they had done in Chaucer's Catholic days. So he could have learnt all about the Catholic customs in his boyhood at Stratford without adopting that Creed.

It is probable that Stratford, like many other country places, remained Catholic for several years after Queen Elizabeth ceased to profess that Religion in 1558. The Vestments kept in Holy Trinity Church were not destroyed till 1571; John Brethgirdle, who succeeded a Marian Priest as Vicar in 1560, had no licence to preach and was unmarried, and after his death in 1565 there seems to have been no Vicar till 1569. And Simon Hunt, who was the master at the Grammar-School from 1571 to 1577, became a Jesuit in 1578. Sir Sidney Lee thinks that Shakespeare "probably made his entry in 1571," and probably left the Grammar-School in 1577, when he was thirteen. If this is right, Shakespeare was taught only by Hunt.

Though we have no trace that he was named in any Recusant List this can prove nothing, for a great many Catholics escaped or avoided that unpleasant distinction. Ben Jonson, for instance, though he professed the Catholic Creed so publicly that he appointed himself to represent the rest of the Catholics when he denounced the Gunpowder Plot in



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Westminster Hall in 1605, does not seem to have figured in a Recusant List or to have been troubled in any way except when the Wicked Earl of Northampton (who died a Catholic) threatened to prosecute him for Popery in revenge for a thrashing administered to one of his servants.

We know that Shakespeare's two daughters had Biblical names which were not often used in Catholic families, and that both married men who seem to have been inclined to be Puritans. Susanna, the elder, married John Hall, a physician, who if he was a Puritan was a tolerant one, for he had many Catholic patients; and Judith married Thomas Quiney without a licence in Lent, and was excommunicated for this soon after Shakespeare's death. Still, his daughters' probable Creed cannot prove Shakespeare's since, for instance, the third Earl of Southampton brought his sons up as Protestants though he did not become one till 1609. But it may show that if he was a Catholic at all he was tepid, like the Earl of Southampton.

When his daughter Susanna died in 1643 somebody wrote in her epitaph, which is still to be seen in Holy Trinity Church,

Witty above her sex, but that's not all,  
Wise to Salvation, was good Mistress Hall :  
Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this  
Wholly of him with whom she's now in bliss.

This seems to assert that Shakespeare had not been wise to Salvation, and it probably means that he had not professed his son-in-law's Creed. This may mean that he stood apart from all the Religions or that the Vicar of Sapperton was right when he recorded of him in a note written before 1708, that "he died a Papist." It does not seem probable that the Vicar of Sapperton would have asserted this unless he believed it; but we do not know what evidence would have satisfied him. Even if this statement was true it would not prove that Shakespeare lived as a Catholic, since in those days many people (including some, such as Penelope Devereux and the Earl of Northampton, who were never remarkably religious) became Catholics at the end, when the risk of persecution was over.

If his daughters both married men who were inclined to

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be Puritans, we can infer that he was not hostile to the Puritan Creed, and this seems borne out by the fact that a preacher was entertained at his house in 1614. Since the Corporation of Stratford was mainly Puritan then, this preacher was probably a Puritan one.

Sir Sidney Lee writes, "Shakespeare's references to Puritans in the Plays of his middle and later life are so uniformly discourteous that they must be judged to reflect his personal feelings"; but this is a mistake. In the fourth Act of *The Winter's Tale* the Clown says that the shearers are "Three-man song-men all, and very good ones; but they are most of them means and bases; but one Puritan amongst them and he sings psalms to a hornpipe." In the first Act of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Mrs. Quickly says of John Rugby, "An honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant shall come in house withal, and I warrant you no tell-tale nor no breed-bate; his worst fault is that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish that way: but nobody but has his fault; but let that pass." In the first Act of *All's Well that Ends Well* the Clown says, "If men could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in marriage; for young Charbon the Puritan and old Poysam the Papist, howsome'er their hearts are severed in Religion, their heads are both one." And in the second Act of *Twelfth Night* Maria says of Malvolio, "Marry, Sir, sometimes he is a kind of Puritan"; Sir Andrew Aguecheek says, "Oh, if I thought that, I'd beat him like a dog"; Sir Toby Belch says, "What, for being a Puritan? Thy exquisite reason, dear Knight"; and Sir Andrew replies, "I have no exquisite reason for it; but I have reason good enough"; and Maria rejoins, "The devil the Puritan that he is, or anything constantly, but a time-pleaser."

The details about John Rugby suggest that he was probably drawn from some one at Stratford for a local performance since they have no effect in the Play, and there is nothing to show that he was a Puritan; John Marston, for instance, called the Catholics "Peevish Papists." The three allusions to Puritans are put in the mouths of two Clowns and an idiot. Even Sir Andrew cannot furnish a reason, and he says later, "It must be with valour, for Policy I hate: I had as lief be a Brownist as a Politician."

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The Brownists were Separatist Puritans called after Robert Browne, who was imprisoned in England in 1581 and 1584 and in Scotland in 1583 and excommunicated in 1586 but then submitted and became Rector of Achurch in 1591. The Politicians were the time-pleasers who were indifferent in Religious affairs. Their name was borrowed from France (where it was first used about 1568, and applied to the men who were neither Huguenots nor opposed to them), and they were described by Thomas Stapleton in his *Sermo Contra Politicos* as "polite and civil, elegant and gentleman-like, prudent and wise, turning Religion into Policy and making a mock at zeal." Shakespeare may have been thinking of them when in the fourth Act of *King Lear* he made the King say,

Get thee glass eyes,  
And like a scurvy politician, seem  
To see the thing thou dost not.

Elsewhere in his Plays, as when in the *First Part of King Henry the Fourth* he made Hotspur say,

Never did bare and rotten policy  
Colour her working with such deadly wounds,

and in the first Act of *Troilus and Cressida* he made Ulysses say,

They tax our policy and call it cowardice,

Policy meant crafty discretion. If it was safe to deduce his private opinions from the talk of his Characters we could conclude that he liked the old zeal of the Catholics and the young zeal of the Puritans, who suffered with them, better than the time-serving indifference of the wise Politicians. In those days the Catholic and the Puritan martyrs rivalled one another in courage and the devout men of those Creeds had a great deal in common; for instance, no Puritan surpassed the austerity of the Monks of the Charter-House. The Penal Laws which harried them both were mainly the work of Politicians, such as Lord Burghley, who had professed three Creeds, King Henry the Eighth's and King Edward the Sixth's and Queen Mary's (with a particular

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zeal because he was terrified) before he decided to establish a Compromise.

If, as I think, the later Tragedies show that Shakespeare was then attracted by the Stoic Philosophy (which may be why Ben Jonson's Crispinus proclaimed that he was a Stoic), this would have brought him in touch with the Catholic and Protestant Puritans. But there is no sign of this mood in the Poems written by him when he was young. Susanna Hall's Epitaph and the apparent note of doubt in his Tragedies are the sole signs that he was not a Catholic first and a Puritan afterwards, for Davies' tradition only dealt with his death-bed.

There were many such changes then. The Recusant Lists of 1592 (which included some Puritans) prove that there were prominent Catholics in Warwickshire then, but do not give us the number. All the Lists of this kind omit many who were certainly Catholic: for instance, the *English Protestant's Plea* stated that none of the leaders of the Gunpowder Plot had ever been included in them. We know that in 1596 Worcestershire was more notably Catholic and the Puritans were increasing in Warwickshire. In that year Thomas Bilson, who was Bishop of Worcester then, wrote to Sir Robert Cecil: "I have viewed the state of Worcester Diocese, and find it, as may somewhat appear by the particulars here enclosed, of the quantity as dangerous as any place that I know. In that small circuit there are nine score Recusants of note, besides retainers, wanderers and secret lurkers dispersed in forty several parishes, and six score and ten households. . . . Besides, Warwick and the parts thereabout are freighted with a number of men precisely conceited against Her Majesty's Government Ecclesiastical." The Catholics had been increasing in Worcestershire because Father Edward Oldcorne (who was executed in 1605 and was called by them the Apostle of Worcestershire) had been living at Hindlip near Worcester since 1588; and their numbers had grown in Warwickshire between 1588 and 1592 because Father Henry Garnet had been hidden there then. In 1605 Warwickshire was a Catholic stronghold, and was a centre of the Gunpowder Plot for that reason and because it was near Catholic Wales. Father John



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Gerard said that Sir Everard Digby had retired into Warwickshire "as into a place of most safety." And when Shakespeare died Warwickshire was notoriously Puritan. It may be that the independence which made the people there cling to the old Creed or return to it made them prefer Puritanism after the tragedy of the Gunpowder Plot in the same way as the Welsh remained Catholic for a long time and turned to Dissent.

In those days the bigotry which afterwards sundered Englishmen had not become prevalent. For instance, about 1618 John Donne, who was then one of the King's Chaplains though he had begun as a Catholic, wrote to Sir Toby Mathew, who was one of the sons of a Welsh Archbishop of York but had become a Catholic when he was aged thirty : "That we differ in our ways, I hope we pardon one another. Men go to China both by the Straits and by the Cape. I never misinterpreted your way, nor suffered it to be so, wheresoever I found it in discourse. . . . This letter doth therefore only ask your safe-conduct for these others of mine, which are to follow, as the most constant testimonies of my love." And Toby Mathew remained Francis Bacon's dearest friend and companion, his "alter ego," after his change. Neither did his change keep him from being Strafford's intimate friend, nor did it make him a bigot, for in the Preface to his *Collection of Letters*, edited by Donne's son in 1660, he wrote : "There are not to be seen in the whole World either better Catholics or better Protestants than in England."

Shakespeare may have thought with John Donne that men go to China both by the Straits and by the Cape, or he may not have been concerned with such things because he lived in his dreams till (if Davies was right) he called for a hidden Priest on his death-bed. In either case he could have lived amicably with Puritan neighbours. If he was ever a Puritan or inclined to be one and yet ended a Catholic he was imitated in this by John Milton, according to Milton's brother Sir Christopher, whose word has been doubted by Mr. Mark Pattison and others because he made the same change though this does not seem a good reason for refusing to trust a statement made by a Judge. If he was a Catholic in the troubled days after the Gunpowder Plot, these would

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have given him reasons for keeping his belief to himself, and this may account for his later hesitation or reticence. But there is no proof that he ever shared the Religion of Montaigne and Cervantes.

If he was ever a Catholic, this would explain, for instance, what caused the marriage-bond of 1582 (if it is genuine and connected with him) and how he came in touch with the young Earl of Southampton, and why he was godfather to one of Ben Jonson's children in Jonson's Catholic days, and why he incurred blame for his silence when other Poets lamented Queen Elizabeth, as from Chettle, who wrote in his *England's Mourning Garment* in 1603,

Shepherd, remember our Elizabeth  
And mourn her Rape done by our Tarquin, Death,  
and why he wrote in one of his *Sonnets*,

My body being dead,  
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,

for only Catholics and Rebels could see a chance of the executioner's knife, the penalty of Treason, and why he took the Catholic view of Oldcastle, and why three Acts of *King Henry the Eighth* were written from the Catholic standpoint, and why he wrote the last lines of the Epilogue to *The Tempest*, which may refer to the Catholic doctrine of Indulgences, and if they mean anything must be a plea for prayers after Death,—

And my ending is despair,  
Unless I be relieved by prayer,  
Which pierces so, that it assaults  
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.  
As you from crimes would pardoned be,  
Let your indulgence set me free.

Also this would help to explain his darker mood in the times after the Gunpowder Plot when so many Catholics abandoned their Creed, some in shame, some in despair, as is recorded for instance in a private report sent to Rome in 1614 by Father Richard Blount, who was the Superior of the Jesuits then, "I suppose you are informed of our

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occurrents here : the state of Catholics most miserable : many fall away ; those that stand ruined in their temporalities."

He had other reasons for darkness at the end of his life if he cared anything at all about England. Year by year all the prospects of his Country were darkened. In 1614, one of the years in which he visited London, the Addled Parliament gave the signal for the contest which caused the Great Civil War and in the next year, the last he was to finish, Somerset and his wife were arrested for the murder of Overbury. It may be that he could have written with Drayton,

I find this age of ours marked with this fate  
That honest men are still precipitate  
Under base villains. . . .  
To tell my Country's shame I not delight,  
But do bemoan it I am no Democrite.

There were other things which may have prevented his finding an unusual happiness at the close of his days. Life had been dear and it was passing away, and he was about to leave his wife and his children. Cervantes died on the same date as he did, the twenty-third of April, 1616 (though not on the same day since England kept the old style), and wrote from his death-bed to the Conde de Lemos : "Ayer me dieron la Extrema Uncion, y hoy escribo esta : el tiempo es breve, las ansias crecen, las esperanzas menguan, y con todo esto llevo la vida sobre el deseo que tengo de vivir." And it may be that Shakespeare found no greater cause to be glad in those April days when he knew that never again would he watch the Spring come to the winding shores of the Avon.

Besides, the work to which he had given his life seemed to be fruitless, for much of it had not even been printed, and in these altered times the Stage was degraded and the Puritans, who were rising to power, hoped to destroy it. Even in Stratford the Corporation which met in the Guildhall close to his house declared that Plays were unlawful and tried to discourage Players from visiting their respectable town in February, 1611-1612. In the year of his death a

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neighbouring town, Henley in Arden, disobeyed the King's licence by forbidding the Players to perform in its Town-hall. If Shakespeare was honoured in his home when he died, it was in spite of the fact that he had been a writer of Plays. It is improbable that he ever imagined what renown he had earned or that he would have valued it much, for what is the use of laurels when one is dead? And if the Droeshout Engraving resembles him he looked on the World pallidly without consolation.

When Heminge and Condell dedicated the Folio of 1623 to their official patron, the third Earl of Pembroke, who was then the Lord Chamberlain, and to his brother, the first Earl of Montgomery (of whom Clarendon stated, "He pretended to no other qualifications than to understand Horses and Dogs very well") they wrote: "When we value the places your Highnesses sustain we cannot but know their dignity greater than to descend to the reading of these trifles; and while we have named them trifles we have deprived ourselves of the defence of our Dedication." We have no reason to doubt that this expressed their opinion of the Plays in the Folio.

Except Francis Meres' tribute in *Palladis Tamia*, which meant little for he was lavish in praise, we have no record that anyone of any importance took Shakespeare's Tragedies seriously while he was alive. And apart from the Laudatory Verses prefixed to the Folio of 1623 or printed in John Benson's edition of the Poems of 1640, which meant little because they were usual, we have no record that anyone who knew him imagined that they were more than entertainments adapted to the taste of the Pit, "the vulgar's element" as Scoloker called them. It is probable that Beaumont referred to them when he wrote to Ben Jonson,

If thou hadst itched after the wild applause  
Of common people, and hadst made thy laws  
In writing such as catcht at present voice,  
I should commend the thing, but not thy choice.

Coleridge wrote, "Beaumont and Fletcher sneer at Shakespeare with a spite far more malignant than Jonson."



## CONTEMPORARY OPINION

John Webster in his Address to the Reader prefixed to the *White Diuel*, printed in 1612, named Shakespeare after Chapman and Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher and merely praised "the right happy and copious industry of M. Shakespeare, M. Dekker and M. Heywood." Camden said nothing of him in his *Britannia*, and in his *Remains concerning Britain* mentioned him at the end of a list of ten Authors. John Ford never praised him, even when he tried to revive the Chronicle Histories in his *Perkin Warbeck*, printed in 1634, and the Prologue to that Play seems to blame Shakespeare's way in such Histories as *King Henry the Fourth* when it says,

nor is here  
Unnecessary mirth forced to endear  
A multitude.

John Davies, when he wanted to praise him, called him "our English Terence." Even Milton, though he paid him a tribute in a Sonnet in 1630, wrote two years later in *L'Allegro*,

Then to the well-trod Stage anon,  
If Jonson's learned Sock be on,  
Or sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child,  
Warble his native woodnotes wild.

Since the scantness of Drayton's praise and the arrogance of Ben Jonson's opinion may be partly explained by quarrels with Shakespeare, these other verdicts deserve greater attention and they help to explain why Heminge and Condell called the Plays trifles.

We have no means of knowing whether Shakespeare agreed with them. We might infer that he did if we could conclude that he never thought of printing his Plays, for this might show that he thought little of them or that he left their publication to chance and could have said with Macbeth,

If Chance will have me King, why, Chance may crown me  
Without my stir.

The odds are that he did not think that there was any question of Kingship. He alone knew how far the Plays he had written were inferior to the Plays he had planned. He saw how the

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Plays which had been admired in his Youth had been consigned to forgetfulness : Lyly's Comedies were buried with *Gorboduc* ; Greene, Peele and Nashe were names ; Kyd was only remembered because the Pit still enjoyed an altered form of *Jeronimo*, and even Marlowe was rejected as barbarous. Though Ben Jonson wrote of " Marlowe's mighty line " in the Verses prefixed to the Folio of 1623 he expressed his real opinion when he wrote of himself in *Discoveries*, " Though his language differ from the Vulgar somewhat, it shall not fly from all Humanity, with the Tamer-lanes and the Tamer-chams of the late age, who had nothing in them but the Scenical strutting and furious vociferation to warrant them to the ignorant gaper."

It may be that Shakespeare would have said of his Plays with Theseus, " the best of this kind are but shadows ; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them," or with Mercutio,

I talk of dreams,  
Which are the children of an idle brain,  
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,  
Which is as thin of substance as the air.

If he did not try to keep them remembered we might think that (like Prospero) he repented his witchcraft and that instead of attaching importance to the fame of the Stage he only asked for Oblivion (as Marston did when he was dying), and that the Verses on his grave were a prayer to be let alone in its silence,

Safe from the Wolf's black jaw and the dull Ass's hoof.  
If so that prayer was partly vain,

The Wild Ass  
Stamps o'er his head, but cannot break his sleep.

Heminge and Condell, however, wrote in their Address to the Reader : " It had been, we confess, a thing worthy to have been wished that the Author himself had lived to have set forth and over-seen his own Writings : but, since it hath been ordered otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envy his friends the office

## THE FIRST FOLIO

of their care and pain to have collected and published them." This may mean that he had intended to publish the Plays in the Folio or to leave them prepared. His bequest of money for rings to Heminge and Condell and to Burbage (who died in 1619) may be a sign that he had entrusted the publication to them when he saw that it was out of his power. In that case he resembled Gil Vicente in this, as in other things, for Vicente (of whom Andres de Resende wrote,

Gillo, auctor et actor,

Gillo, jocis levibus doctus perstringere mores)

retired to his quiet home in the fields in 1536 and there devoted himself to preparing his Works for publication but died before his task was completed.

In the year of Shakespeare's death, 1616, Ben Jonson's First Folio was published. Ben Jonson only printed the Plays which satisfied him, and he omitted *Bartholomew Fair*, which had been acted in 1614, and rejected the early Tragical Work which had won him a place in Francis Meres' list of Tragedians. And even Ben Jonson when he dedicated *Every Man Out of His Humour* to "the Noblest Nurseries of Humanities and Liberty in the Kingdom, the Inns of Court" wrote, "Now that the Printer, by a doubled charge, thinks it worthy a longer life than commonly the air of such things doth promise, I am careful to put it a servant to their pleasures, who are the inheritors of the first favour borne it. Yet I command it lie not in the way of your more noble and useful studies." He may have known that Shakespeare had planned a Folio edition.

Heminge and Condell may have printed their Folio for their Company's profit. We do not know whether Shakespeare had sold his share in the Company, for the fact that his Will makes no mention of it is not conclusive since Burbage and Condell, for instance, did not bequeath the shares which they possessed when they died. But even if he had sold his share he might have expected some payment for revising the Plays.

It seems to me that the many signs of revision in the Folio indicate that he was preparing the Plays for it; but this is uncertain because we do not know how often they

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

were revised. And I think that the later signs of revision suggest an attempt to cure faults which would not have impeded the applause of the Pit.

Heminge and Condell wrote in their Address to the Reader: "His mind and hand went together, and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." This may mean that he took the trouble to make a clean copy of the Plays which he furnished. Or it may mean that he wrote the different forms of them fluently without harking back to alter what he had written: he may have preferred to test them by their effect on the Stage (instead of pausing to search for faults), and to change them afterwards if he thought it worth while. This, I think, was his method, and it would help to account for many of the faults of his Plays and for a few of their virtues.

This method would have kept him in touch with the eager life of his days, and that effect would have been also produced if he copied men of his time in his Characters, as was stated, for instance, by Sir Charles Scroop when he wrote before 1686,

When Shakespeare, Jonson, Fletcher ruled the Stage,  
They took so bold a freedom with the Age,  
That there was scarce a knave or fool in town  
Of any wit, but had his fashion shown.

Such a liberty taken with knaves and fools would have helped his Plays to mirror the times. But it would also have degraded the Plays with an ignoble vivacity. The vitality given to base people in them, even in the Tragedies, is one of the things which set him apart from his only competitors in Tragical Plays, Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. And this separation is radical.

The Greek Tragical Stage was an altar of Sacrifice: his Stage was a Mummers' booth for ignorant crowds. The Greek Tragical dramatist knew that his Players would wear masks and recite in huge Amphitheatres and so was compelled to enforce his story by grouping them,—he saw like a sculptor, and his Characters shared the dignity and the final repose of Statues. In the same way Michael Angelo made his faces



## SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES

immortal by studying the look of the dead. The Greek Tragical Characters spoke as if there was nobody listening; they were aloof in a higher World of their own: Shakespeare's Players talked in the Pit, they were breathing the rank breath of the Crowd and they were jostled by the men who had paid to have their stools on the Stage; they spoke either to their hearers or for them. A Greek Tragedy had the calm of a whirlpool, for it dealt with a climax, the end of a tale already known to the hearers: Shakespeare was unfolding a tale, and he did this with a deliberate falsity, making his Characters tell their secret thoughts and explain all their emotions. Besides, the Greek language has a carven precision and a quietness which may be in part due to the fact that in reading it we remember how long ago it was written; the Greeks may have found the Works of Egypt as quiet and all that lost Literature a *Book of the Dead*: in Shakespeare's time England was young and his language was only reaching maturity.

It was his aim to write a Book of the Living. Still, he did not draw his times as they were, but as he saw them in the Kingdom of Dreams, and this alteration made his work universal. Calderon is too Spanish to appeal to the World and Molière is too French; but there are no limits to the Kingdom of Dreams. And this is why his Tragical Characters are all unsubstantial: they soar above everyday Life as flame rises from coal or as his Poetry sprang from his prosaic Blank Verses.

It may be that his juvenile Tragedies and his Chronicle Pageant and all his Comedies except the last form of *The Tempest* were written to please himself and his patrons, without any effort, and that he would have reckoned them ephemeral things. These were his "native woodnotes wild" and they are full of the happy repetitions of birds. He is seen in these Comedies like one of his Jesters, commenting on the ways of the World with snatches of song. It was his lot to earn his bread as a Jester, spending his wit to win the laughter of fools, and he did this as naturally and lightly as Touchstone. This set him apart from Ben Jonson, who when he wrote Comedies resembled the Elephant imagined by Milton in the garden of Eden,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

### The unwieldy Elephant

To make them mirth used all his might, and wreathed  
His lithe proboscis.

Heminge and Condell's boast of the easiness with which he wrote Plays is supported by his visible fluency. The fact that he wrote so few seems to show that he did not give much time to this pleasure. Even if we add *Pericles* to the Folio list he only left thirty-four Plays, many of them written as trifles and some, for instance, nearly all the Chronicle Pageant, openly founded on Plays written by others, and if he began writing about 1588 these are the fruit of twenty-eight years. In those days Lope de Vega Carpio, who was born in 1562 and died in 1635, wrote according to Montalban four hundred Autos and eighteen hundred Plays (not counting Entermeses), of which about four hundred Plays and forty Autos survive. Shakespeare seems to have been equally fluent, so the smallness of his output may show that while he was in London he only wrote Plays when they happened to be required by his Company. This may explain why he seems to have written many of them with the carelessness of natural talk.

He used all his might in his last Tragedies, or in portions of them, and he lived in them not as a Jester but as a man who endured the worst of their agonies; so they must have been more to him and he may have wished to give them a chance of being remembered and may have revised them for a Folio edition. But it is improbable that he would have presumed to differ from all the learned men of his day by attaching much importance to them or that he could have guessed that for three hundred years there would be nobody to share his renown. And it is impossible that he could have imagined Samuel Coleridge's hysterical shout, "Merciful, wonder-making Heaven! What a man was this Shakespeare!" Perhaps he would have preferred Samuel Johnson's English sobriety.

He must have known how much he was indebted to others though he may not have thought that anyone would trouble to ask from what medley of dead branches he made his Everlasting Bonfire. Because he knew this he would have been

## AN IMPRESSION OF SHAKESPEARE

less prone to imagine that he would be singled out as a Miracle. The fate of Marlowe's Plays may have taught him not only that noble work could be slighted in a different time but also that it could be botched and degraded by ignoble additions, and if he wished his Plays to be printed it may have been because he preferred that they should survive as they had been written by him if they should chance to be remembered at all.

My impression is that he began as a fragile and effeminate youth, with auburn hair and grey eyes and a bright colour and an excited and over-confident way, superfluously friendly to all and obviously pleased with himself and eager to ape the behaviour of Queen Elizabeth's Court, and that as the years went on he grew quiet and was subdued to the faded elegance of the Ely House Portrait, and that he ended wan and emaciated and quieter still, exhausted by his passionate dreams and in the silence of a man who remembers that he has spoken too much. I think that he was one of the men who live in this World as if they did not belong to it, friendly but not caring much for those they meet and indifferently liked in return, who seem to have something intangible and remote in their nature and to retain youthfulness as if they were exiles from some Country beyond the ravage of Time.

If his ghost haunted this World I would look for it in the Woodland of Arden: there, I think, it would wander in the dusk of the twilight, weary and frail with desolate eyes and a blank face and hair turning grey, soberly dressed, cloaked from the cold and exposing the rich hilt of a sword with some ostentation and keeping a dignity acquired on the Stage, if the dead leaves were falling; but if the branches were green, it would come swift and rejoicing, a youth poorly clad, rich in hope, with a shining face like a girl's, singing under the trees in the early hours of the morning.

This impression seems to me to agree with the image of him shown in his Plays. If we can take *Timon of Athens* to be the last of them all because it is the least finished of them, it may be that the pen dropped from his hand when he had written,

Come not to me again: but say to Athens  
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

and the comment on those words of farewell,

These well express in thee thy latter spirits :  
Though thou abhorr'dst in us our human griefs,  
Scorn'dst our brain's flow and those our droplets which  
From niggard nature fall, yet rich conceit  
Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye  
On thy low grave, on faults forgiven.



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